601 hand corner of the kinship chart marries into the line at its right, this new line is again called the mari, mokul, marelker line to terminate the system.

601 The new line of kin, however, is necessary if the asymmetrical type of marriage is to remain stable, since, as has already been explained, the
602 mari-kutara reciprocal creates an equilibrium in the kinship structure by balancing the inequalities of the gawel-waku reciprocal. Momelker and natjiwalker are important because the former is the mother of ego's mother-in-law and the latter is the brother of this woman. Dumungur, reciprocal of these terms, is emotionally important because, from the point of view of momelker and natchiwalker, he is the person who has a feeling of taboo for them since the woman is his mother-in-law's mother.

Marelker is mari's son. He follows his father's behavior toward ego. He later will be ego's son's mari. He treats ego's children with all the affection of a mother and father. He is gawel to ego's galle (wife's brother) to whom ego stands in the potentially weak relationship of dué. The whole mari-marelker line and gurrong-kutara line add a check to the gawel-galle line and balance the kinship system.

The momelker relationship is built out of the mokul rumeru behavior. Ego acts to her as his gawel does (she is gawel's mokul). She is the mother of mokul rumeru, the natives say; and just as one avoids a mother of one's wife, so one avoids her mother. The natchiwalker line also acts as a check on the mari line and further balances the kinship system as it stands in the relation of gawel and galle to mari-marelker line of descent.

617 MURNGIN SUBSECTIONS

171 The Murngin, like the Kariera and Arunta relatives, are regrouped into larger reciprocal divisions. Professor Radcliffe-Brown has called these divisions "sections" when they number four, as among the Kariera; and "subsections" when they number eight, as among the Arunta. His brilliant paper also for the first time recognized the true importance of these divisions and gave them the formulary expression used in this book.[18]

The Murngin system shares many elements with the two major types of section and subsection found in Australia, but in certain respects it does not conform to either.

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[18] Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., "The Social Organization of Australian Tribes," *Oceania*, Vol. I, 1930.

Gunabibi sequences and many of the men and the leaders who sing them 177
are at present subincised.[3]

The ceremonial life of the Murngin seems to be constantly enriched by 852
cultural waves coming from the south—that is, from Central Australia— 304
as will be demonstrated when we examine their burial customs from an historical point of view. The technological borrowings, of recent times at least, are from the seacoast and not from the inland. We must turn to the Malay contacts to see what traits have been taken and by what cultural processes they have been chosen from the contact of the Malay traders from the north and west.

MALAY INFLUENCE ON THE ABORIGINAL CULTURES OF NORTHEASTERN ARNHEM LAND

The Malays, from an early date, made yearly voyages down through the 175
East Indian Islands and through the Arafura Sea to the northern coast of Australia. Their prows sailed into many harbors and river mouths that indent the coast, from the Victoria River, which flows into the Indian Ocean in West Australia, to the southern limits of the Gulf of Carpentaria in the east.

Sir Matthew Flinders, in the second volume of his *Voyage to Terra Australis*, reports having seen first evidences of the Malays in the Pellew Islands.[4] He next speaks of them when he was anchored at Caledon

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[3] The people to the south and west of the Murngin practice subincision. It seems [171]
to have a distribution that projects up the Goyder River to the Crocodile Islands. The following people practice it; Rainbarngo, the people around Cape Stewart, the Djinba, Ritarngo, the Marunga Island people (some do, some do not—it is a matter of personal choice), and the Burera (a matter of personal choice). None of the people east of them go through this ordeal except a few who have made long visits to the people west and south of them and have gone through the Gunabibi ceremony. In the more northern parts of the subincision distribution the cutting is unritualized. Two men go out and stand in a river or pool to above their waists. One takes a sharp stone knife and splits the urethra of the other; either at the same time or later, the one who has been cut reciprocates by performing the same operation on his friend. Farther south, subincision is a definite part of the Gunabibi ceremony. Clitoridectomy also seems to be practiced in this ceremony by these southern peoples. It seems likely that if other factors do not disturb the culture, the subincision element of the Gunabibi will spread into northeastern Arnhem Land and become a part of the ritual within this area. Many of the people at the present day sing a subincision song as part of the ceremony even though they do not go through the ordeal.

[4] Page 172—"Pellew Group: December, 1802: Indications of some foreign people having visited this group were almost as numerous, and as widely extended as those left by the natives. Besides pieces of earthen jars and trees cut with axes, we found remnants of bamboo lattice work, palm leaves sewed with cotton thread into the form of such hats as are worn by the Chinese, and the remains of blue cotton trousers, of the fashion called moormans. A wooden anchor of one fluke, and three boats' rudders of violet wood were also found; but what puzzled me most was a collection of stones piled together in a line, resembling a low wall, with short lines running perpendicularly at the back, dividing the space behind into compartments. In each of these

648 whites of the north have for the black men of this district. The killing of several whites and Japanese has put a heavy fear in the hearts of all intruders into these parts. The natives have a reputation for treachery, largely because of their ambushing of several white pearlers and night attacks on a few Japanese boats, where all the men were killed, in retaliation for mistreatment of their women.

144 These last few remarks have been added further to substantiate the possible causes which prevented race mixture when the Malays were coming into North Australia. Since the rapacious civilization of the West cannot produce half-castes in this region, it is less probable that the more gentle Malay culture would produce racial hybrids in North Australia. Tindale, in his article on the Groote Eylandt natives, says that the Malays were interested in acquiring native women to take home with them. I can find no evidence of this among the Murngin and their neighboring tribes. A number of native men, however, did go to Macassar and the other islands whence the Malays had come. The writer met one or two of these men who had served as pearlers on seasonal voyages on Malay boats.

177 The influence of the Malay race and culture has not been important in northeastern Arnhem Land. There are but slight traces of hybridization in race or culture. The greatest influence is found in the material culture, and the least in the social institutions of Murngin civilization. Compared with the total number of traits found in aboriginal culture, those added from the more eastern civilization are very few indeed and, with the exception of the dugout complex, have had no significant influence on the development of Murngin civilization. On the other hand, when an examination is made of the even larger number of traits found in Malay culture, and they are contrasted with the very few adopted by the Murngin from the Malays, it becomes even further demonstrable that Murngin civilization remained very near to what it was before the Malay arrived, and that the Malay gave little of his own civilization to aboriginal Australia.

History of Burial Customs

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The Murngin now finally dispose of their dead by placing the bones in a symbolically carved hollow log and planting the log upright within the camp. This is true of all the tribes except those in Cape Wessel Island, where the natives, after wrapping the bones of the dead in paper bark, put them in rock shelters. I am told by island natives that the rock shelter is used also in the interior back of Blue Mud Bay. All the natives to the west, such as the Gunwingu and Maung, use the hollow-log method of disposal. Historically this situation raises an interesting problem of priority of burial customs. The distribution of the rock burial method in the far

north and southeast on the periphery not only of the Murngin but also of 171
the whole of Australia suggests that this method was first and that the 764
hollow log is a later intrusion. Against this is the fact that the use of the
hollow log as a bone repository is not an isolated item in Murngin material 174
culture, for the log is used as a basic material for the making of a number of objects such as the trumpet and the drum and their smoking pipes.

An examination of these last three objects from an historical point of 171
view proves fruitful when we remember that the pipe is quite recent in 174
Murngin culture, having been brought in by the Malays. The Uvar drum seems to be fairly late because it is associated with the Ulmark ceremony wherever it is found, and the Ulmark is only partly distributed in the Murngin clans and also seems to be spreading in from the south. It is also not found in the northeastern clans where the hollow-log burial is absent. There are a number of clans farther south than Wessel Island which do not have the Ulmark drum. Of the objects made from a hollow-log form, only one seems comparatively old within Murngin culture. Their comparative recency lends color to the belief that the hollow-log burial is more recent, particularly when one remembers its distribution. This last bit of evidence is obviously insufficient by itself and is merely offered as support for the general thesis of the recency of log burial.

The conclusive proof of this historical induction comes from archaeologi- 171
cal finds. Around Arnhem Bay, Buckingham Bay and at Caddell Straits, 172
as well as farther inland, the bones of great numbers of skeletons can be
found in the dry rock shelters at the present time. Some of them were 174
collected by the writer. They had been laid out in burial position and some had pieces of bark lying with them. The natives said that they were the bones of very old people who once lived there but who belonged to a different race. Some of them attach the destruction myths to the disappearance of this race whose bones repose in the rock shelters, and others said they were the bones of Wongar people. The bones showed indications of having been covered with red ocher, and the skulls when measured and observed demonstrated that they were authentic remains of Australoid peoples and were undoubtedly racially the same people who occupy the region at the present time. The Murngin knew that these burials were the same as those at Wessel Island, and it was finding the rock burials which brought out the information that Wessel Island people still use this type of interment. With the evidence of a peripheral distribution of rock shelter burials at the present time associated with the findings of rock shelter burials of a former time in the central Murngin area, it seems fairly conclusive proof that the Murngin of the whole area once used the rock shelter method, and that the log coffin interment is more recent than the other.

excavated. Paper bark is usually placed in the hole and is also used as a covering during cold nights. 342 [513]

With the exception of the lean-to variety of Types 4 and 5, all of the above huts are constructed for the rainy season. Because of the thicknesses of paper bark, they keep completely dry, even in the heavy tropical rains. The natives never build in advance in preparation for the rainy period. Nothing is done when the clouds first appear, even though it is realized that the rain may be upon them in a few hours. When it is decided that the rain will start within the next half hour or hour, the natives watch the tide carefully. If the tide is going out it pulls the clouds out to sea; but as soon as the tide changes they start building, and usually the rain is upon them before construction is finished. Instead of being displeased at being thoroughly soaked, there is usually much merriment and they seem to enjoy the great confusion and noise. Each house usually includes but one family. [592] The wives of a polygamous household always live under one roof.

A dry-season camp is largely a series of circles, each defined by an outline 361 of strips of paper bark and by a border of sand that has been heaped up from excavating shallow holes for the occupants who compose a family group. No one ever walks over or through another's camp circle.

The people along the Goyder River and the farther interior always take 342 to the high ground as soon as the wet season starts, and when the rains appear in earnest build long communal houses out of the arched bark of 361 the eucalyptus. This communal house is well covered with paper bark, sand, and bushes to keep out the rain, and it is also excavated in the interior and made very low so that the wind will not be able to blow through it. It has two entrances, and fires are put at each end and sometimes in the interior. Frequently this house has two ridgepoles on forked sticks, and the bark is bent over them in the same manner as for Type 4.

Type 6: The Pile House.—In the Goyder and Glyde River district a 342 special type of "pile" house with gabled superstructure and known as a "mosquito house" is constructed. No other people intensively studied by [171] the author had this form.

Four forked poles about eight feet high are put in the ground. Ridge poles placed in the forks connect the uprights and form a rectangle.

Cross-pieces connect the ridgepoles and make a floor. On top of these grass is put, and then a final covering of heavy paper bark.

Four uprights half again as high as the first are then set up on the corners of the platform. At the center of each end of the floor are placed two more forked uprights about one-third again as high as the last four; a ridgepole connecting these last two uprights forms the peak of the gable. Two more ridgepoles also connect the pairs of poles on each side of the house. Rafters are then put down from the highest center ridgepole to the

Ainmaras.—These native artifacts serve as a woman's article of apparel, 285
a mat to sit on, a sunshade, and a mosquito and fly net. All of the uses except the first, which is primary, are employed by both men and women.

The ainmara is made of the inner bark of the pandanus with the twining technique. When open it looks like the bottom of a large basket, and when folded like a quarter section of a circle; it is ordinarily twenty inches long and thirty-six inches at its greatest width. The folded ainmaras are a constant equipment of women.

Sometimes the warp is left as a six-inch fringe around the edge of the ainmara.

The half-circle variety of the ainmara (twenty-six and one-half inches by thirty inches) cannot be used for a sunshade or mosquito and fly net.

Both are sometimes decorated with overstitched lines of pandanus fiber [531]
or human hair string.

Ainmaras are made by both men and women, but usually by women. [462]
The woman starts at the center and gradually widens it as she continues her twining. The enlarging surface is kept smooth and even by placing the mat on the sand and rubbing it with a smooth flat stone.

A small fiber string loop is put into the point of the folded ainmara [482]
and a woman carries it on her arm at the elbow or by holding it in her
hand. Most of the women wear no pubic coverings and when a strange [291
man approaches the camp they cover their pudenda with the ainmara.
Sometimes a woman's modesty affects her in such a way that she hides 834]
her face rather than her pubic parts.

During the midday siesta men and sometimes women open the ainmara and double the body up beneath it to keep the flies off and protect themselves from the direct rays of the sun. During the sand-fly and mosquito months the ainmaras are used to keep off these insects.

3. Weapons

Spear-thrower (*Mang-el*)

The type of spear-thrower used by the Murngin and natives of north- 411
eastern Arnhem Land has a general distribution in Australia from the 171
Kimberleys of West Australia to the southern shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The particular variety of this weapon found among the Murngin reaches the Daly River in the west and south, the Katherine River, also in the south, and east to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Groote Eylandt people possess a modification of the mangel type of spear-thrower. The Kimberley variety, although belonging to the same general type as the Murngin, is larger and is made of a different kind of material from that found among the Arnhem Land natives.

The length of the mangel ranges from thirty-four to thirty-nine inches, 411
with a norm of three feet. It is made of a hard wood of medium weight

X173 Every people had died. They went on to Elcho Island and they found everyone dead there. They saw fire at Montgur, in the Gwiyamil country. They found a brother and sister alive there. They had run to salt water and had swum to this place when they saw the men dying. Moitpa sent his young brother to that place where the fire was. Moitpa went to look all over Elcho Island for people. The Gwiyamil brother and sister lived together and had a large number of children which made plenty of Gwiyamil people again, as Bamapama had done in his country. Ma-a-run-gur, the Gwiyamil brother, sent his sons and daughters to Elcho Island. Moitpa came there too. They saw Moitpa coming and hid in the bush to watch him and his wife. They stood up when Moitpa came close. Moitpa's heart jumped. "The black man is here," he said.

None of these people knew each other. The Gwiyamil man said, "Who are you? Who are your people?"

Moitpa said, "Warumeri. My father is Namerungami [a crazy man; a general name for Bamapama]. Who is your father?"

They replied, "Marungun."

When they found they understood each other's language they weren't afraid any longer, and they came up to each other and clasped each other's arms. Moitpa said, "I'll put you in the canoe and you can show me your father."

They took Moitpa to their father. The old man said, when he saw Moitpa, "Who is your father?"

Moitpa replied, "Bamapama."

"Oh, yes, I know him," the old man said, "I call you people gatu [son] and I call him wawa [older brother]."

This old man had also changed the guratu so that he had all his relatives included and so that instead of having only one moiety he has relatives in his kinship tree.

This Gulera is Truant Island. Gulera is part of the back of a whale that shows above the water. Some of the Dua people who had come from Bamapama made a Narra ceremony on their part of the islands.

BAMAPAMA IN THE DING DING COUNTRY

Malawerango,[2] a Wongar man, went to look for fish. He had made a large fish spear. He was on Elcho Island. While he was looking for fish he saw a young girl sitting down near the red ocher place where Nargi Nargi had placed this paint material. He walked toward that girl. He had a fish spear with him and some of the fish he had speared. He dropped them on the ground and ran to catch the young woman. She ran away from him but he continued to hunt for her. He caught her and had sexual intercourse with her. When he had finished he looked down at the lips of her vagina. He said, "What is that?"

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[2] Malawerango is the name given by Elcho Island people to their Bamapama trickster.

sume a dominant rôle in any of its corporate activities. He can become initiated 602 into its cult "mysteries," certain aspects can be revealed to him; but, however 611 much he may know about these, he remains virtually an outsider.

A man's submerged association with the mother's line of descent may be 602 viewed in terms of mutual aid. It is described in the following way. A man's 611 bones are made from seminal fluid, his flesh from his mother's blood. A male 842 of one moiety and a female of the other have combined in mutual "work" (i.e., *djama*, "work," sexual intercourse) and through their efforts formed the fetus. Because of his bones, the enduring part of his physical body, and because of the patri-ancestor who animated his fetus, a man may be acknowledged a member of his patri-line. But because his mother gave him his flesh, so to speak, he has some connection with her patri-line. Because he has only flesh from her, he cannot handle the sacred emblem poles of her patri-line. [826] But his bones are really his father's *babaru* sacred poles; and because of this, and because of his ancestor's spirit, he attains full status in his father's patri-line. Because his mother co-operated with his father in bringing about his birth, because she added something to his physical being, he must always assist in the ceremonies of his mother's patri-line. When men perform on their sacred [616] ground, those of the opposite moiety aid them in minor dancing, in singing, in calling invocations. But they may never handle the sacred emblems, never impersonate their ancestors; the cloak of spiritual sacredness may never de- [171] scend upon them. A parallel with the Nuba may be drawn here (Nadel 1947:213).

Within the mother's patri-line one finds relationships such as *momo*, 602 NGADI, GALWAL, *yandi*, GALEI, *galei*; intimacy with the females with the 611 *galei*, sexual intimacy, with the *yandi* and *momo*, freedom of expression, lack of constraint; formal constraint with the males, GALEI, NGADI and GALWAL. There too, ideally speaking, are the M.Bros. of each generation of males of the patri-line. This is EGO's avunculine; its importance to EGO depends on the importance of the M.B.

E. *MARI-GU'DARA Line of Inheritance*. The third line of descent is of a 611 different nature: it signifies EGO's descent or inheritance through females to the third ascendant generation level, headed by a male, linking EGO with the patri-line of his m.m. This is not the "matrilineal descent line" spoken of by Radcliffe-Brown, when a man is followed by his Sr.S. Murdock (1949:15, 44) and Herskovits (1949:290), for example, have given us definitions relating to matrilineal descent. Do these conform with what we find among the Wulamba? First, we may observe that this "descent line" cutting diagonally across the structure of the system does not mean that EGO is assigned exclusively to that group (consisting of all females of that line and their male siblings): i.e., it does not assign a person to his mother's kin group. If the latter were inferred, this would mean that EGO would be affiliated with female and male members of both his mother's patri- and matri-lines. Now we may be prepared to say that by matrilineal descent we mean that a person belongs to his mother's "family," but that for purposes of inheritance and succession this is traced

613 171 The point arises here as to whether corporate descent groups of a unilineal nature are common in Australia. They have not been discussed for elsewhere, and the issue remains for empirical investigation. I would suggest that they are present. Take, for example, the vague concept of horde, as a wandering food-collecting group. This consists normally of a small group of men bound together by common descent, plus their wives. Without the latter this is usually of composition similar to that of the unilineal descent group. A great deal has been written, too, of the local group: this material needs re-analysis, in light of some of the problems raised here.[8]

182 428 591 613 We may now consider some of the general propositions relating to the structure of the unilineal descent group, and its place in the total social system, as put forward by Fortes. These aspects, he tells us, hold for both matrilineal and patrilineal groups.

Forde (1947) has discussed the emergence of such descent groups. It is assumed by him, and Lowie (1921), "that unilineal descent groups are not of significance among peoples who live in small groups, depend on a rudimentary technology, and have little durable property" (Fortes 1953:24). Now this is entirely relevant to our material and assumptions, for the descent group we discuss in this paper occurs among an Aboriginal Australian people who, we may assume, conform with the stipulations laid down for the nonsignificance of this group. If we find the unilineal descent group present in this particular situation, we may assume that we will find a strongly emphasized system of transmission of property rights and type of residence after marriage. In the former case, if we consider ritual, songs, invocations, emblems, patterns, and so on as inherited from father to son, with the oblique inheritance of the MARI-GUDARA line, reinforcing patriliny; and in the latter, the importance of patrilocal residence, with its implications relating to the spirit-conception center, these might well be significant reasons for their emergence. A poorly developed technology, and the virtual absence of durable property, are surely not critical factors governing emergence or nonemergence of such groups.

613 121 114 Now I assume from Fortes' (1953:25), "the most important feature of unilineal descent groups in Africa [e.g.] . . . is their corporate organization," that he would regard a group of this kind as a lineage. But can we regard the corporate unilineal descent group discussed in this paper as a lineage? This question I have suggested in the main body of my discussion. I said that each *babaru* could be viewed as a segment, while the parallel linked *babaru*, in toto, could be viewed as an effective lineage. That is to say, we would be considering the linguistic group as the lineage, segmented into effective unilineal descent groups, each of a corporate nature. But this is not a particularly satisfactory position. The question thus arises whether perhaps we can acknowledge the existence of this corporate descent group without considering it a lineage. This, of course, would lead to a more rigid definition of a lineage, when its depth and span would have to be considered.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that for Fortes (1953:25–26) the unilineal corporate descent group is a lineage: "the way this works depends on the kind of

TASMANIANS OI 19

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ABORIGINAL ART OF AUSTRALIA

THE BASIC ART of the Australian aborigines consists of abstract geometric designs, which cannot be interpreted without the aid of the artist who produced them. This art form covers the greater part of the continent. In three areas - the Hawkesbury River basin, with Sydney as a centre, north-western Australia and Arnhem Land - this simple form has been overlaid by a more advanced naturalistic art in which identifiable paintings of animals, birds, fish, reptiles and human beings predominate.

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For many years it was thought that the Tasmanian aborigines had no form of artistic expression. Recently, however, discoveries of rock engravings have been made in three different localities—Mount Cameron West, Devonport and Trial Harbour.[1] Those at Mount Cameron West were cut into a soft calcareous limestone, but those at Devonport and Trial Harbour are in much harder materials, the former in diabase, the latter in granite. The designs, which are made up of circles, concentric circles and straight lines, are similar to those the aborigines carved in the rocks on some parts of the mainland. The Tasmanians also painted designs on sheets of bark.[2]

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Victoria and southern New South Wales are poor in examples of aboriginal art. No rock engravings have been found in Victoria, and only four localities of cave paintings are known. Three of these are in the western part of the state and the fourth in the Lake Tyers area of Gippsland.[3] Though there is a paucity of cave paintings, however, the engravings made by the aborigines on their shields and spear-throwers indicate that they possessed an unusual ability for decorative design. The Victorians, like the Tasmanians, also painted designs on the walls of their bark shelters.[4]

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The dominant art in north-eastern South Australia and western New South Wales is that of the rock engravings, of which many thousands have been discovered.[5] Although the designs are similar to those of the Tasmanians, the technique of producing them was different. Whereas the Tasmanian engravings appear to have been cut or pounded with a boulder, those in South Australia were made by striking the surface of the rock with a sharp-cornered pebble, producing a series of pits, or indentations. In some instances the subject is only outlined, in others the whole design is removed to the depth of a few millimetres. There are a few rock engravings in the soft Miocene limestone which forms the banks of the River Murray.[6] These engravings resemble those at Mount Cameron

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1. Luckman (1950), p. 25.
2. Péron (1807), Pl. 15; Bunce (1857), pp. 49-50.
3. Davidson (1936), p. 77.
4. Smyth (1878), vol. 1, p. 292.
5. Mountford (1935), pp. 207-13.
6. Sheard (1927), pp. 137-40.

[p. 2 is blank]

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West in Tasmania, both in appearance and design.[7] It is possible that the soft rock in both places has allowed the use of similar techniques. In the caves of the River Murray, and in the ranges of South Australia and western New South Wales, are scattered groups of cave paintings.[8] Although in these caves there are many naturalistic figures, the curvilinear abstract forms, similar to those of the rock engravings, are present in equal numbers.

New South Wales has three distinct art forms within its boundaries, rock engravings and cave paintings on the western section, carved trees, commonest in central New South Wales, and rock engravings of the Hawkesbury River basin.

The carved trees extend over a large part of New South Wales and southern Queensland, extending from the Shoalhaven River in the south, to the Tweed River in Queensland, and westward as far as Bourke, on the River Darling.[9] While we know nothing of the purpose of the forms of art already mentioned, we do know, from the writings of early settlers, that these carved trees were used for two purposes. Some were associated with the *bora* (initiation) ceremony, and others with the burial rituals. The living trees were carved with designs, sometimes as long as nine feet, made up of an interesting combination of diamonds, circles, spirals, and other curvilinear patterns; the human figure was seldom used. The labour of cutting these complex designs into the large number of tree-trunks required for a *bora* ground must have been considerable. Black[10] records that there are still over eighty carved trees standing at the Bannaway *bora* ground on the Barwon River.

The aborigines of the Hawkesbury River basin developed an art form which consisted largely of huge outline engravings[11] of human beings, fish, animals, birds and reptiles cut in the soft sandstone. The sea-creatures predominate (as is to be expected on a sea-coast), some of them reaching a length of sixty feet, and there are numerous examples of kangaroos up to twenty-two feet, human beings fifteen feet, and emus thirteen feet long. These large engravings were cut in the soft sandstone either with a sharp-pointed stone tool, or by drilling a series of holes, about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, along the outline of the design, after which the intervening sections were broken or rubbed down. As with the rock engravings of Tasmania and South Australia, and the designs on the carved trees of New South Wales, we have no evidence from the aborigines themselves either of the meanings of these engraved figures, or of the mythology associated with them. The artists who produced these remarkable engravings, and the aborigines who knew their meanings, died many years before we became sufficiently interested to inquire about their art.[12]

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7. Lockman (1950), Pl. 1-8.
8. Black (1943).
9. Etheridge, Junr. (1918), Pl. 39; Black (1941), p. 25.
10. Black (1941), p. 31.
11. Campbell (1899).

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12. In recent years, some workers are placing their own interpretations on the more abstract of these figures. As such interpretations could not have been obtained directly from the aboriginal who produced them, nor from any aboriginal who has seen them produced, and as there are no references in early literature about the meaning of these figures, as given by aboriginal artists, such interpretations should be accepted with considerable reserve.

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ABORIGINAL ART OF AUSTRALIA

Little research has been carried out on the primitive art of Queensland, but, as far as we know, that state appears to be poor in examples of either the cave or rock engraving art. In a few widely separated places rock engravings have been found, resembling those of South Australia both in technique and design.[13] The cave paintings in Blackall, Princess Charlotte Bay,[14] and Carnarvon Ranges, too, like those further south, are made up of both abstract and naturalistic figures. It is in the decorating of his weapons and implements, particularly of his large fighting shields, boomerangs, and spear-throwers that the Queensland aboriginal has excelled.[15] The shields are often up to three feet in length, and on their surface the aboriginal artist painted pleasing geometric, seldom naturalistic, designs, in soft yellows, reds, black and white, symbolic of one of the many mythical ancestors of the tribe.

Over the parts of Australia with which we have already dealt, the aborigines have either died out or discontinued their rich ceremonial life. Because of this, it is seldom possible to find out the meanings of the designs that they painted in caves, carved on tree trunks, or engraved on rock surfaces.

However, the aboriginal culture is still intact in central and northern Australia, and we were able to ask the artists themselves the meanings of the designs they were producing. We found, whether dealing with the simple curvilinear art of Central Australia, or the rich naturalistic art of the north coast, that, almost without exception, the designs illustrated mythical stories that explained the aboriginal's conception of his creation and the surroundings in which he lived.[16]

The aborigines of Central Australia practise the simplest art of all living people. Except for remarkably few naturalistic, but highly formalized figures on the cave walls, those engraved on the sacred objects,[17] painted in ground drawings[18] and on human bodies during ceremonies,[19] are made up almost entirely of combinations of circles, concentric circles, spirals, meanderings and straight lines. This simple curvilinear art has a wide distribution. It is present in Tasmania, South Australia and Central Australia. It reaches to within two hundred miles of Darwin on the north coast, within an equal distance of the Queensland coast, and extends to the west coast of the continent. As these curvilinear designs approach the north-west coast, however, the concentric circles change to concentric squares, and the meandering lines to zigzags.[20] They retain this form until they are absorbed by the naturalistic designs of the north-west aborigines.

The dominant and important elements in the cave art of north-west Australia, particularly in the Kimberley area, are the *Wandjina* figures.[21] These cave paintings, up to fifteen feet in length, depict a human being, with a halo-like band round the head, but usually without a mouth. The *Wandjina* paintings owe their importance in tribal life to their association with rain, rain-making, the rainbow-

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[13] Goddard (1911), p. 371.
[14] Hale and Tindale (1933 b), pp. 116-55.
[15] McConnel (1935), pp. 49-68.
[16] Davidson (1937), Figs. 66-71.
[17] Mountford (1937a), p. 84.
[18] Spencer (1928), Figs. 303-7.
[19] Spencer (1928), ch. 19.
[20] Davidson (1937), Figs. 52-7.
[21] Love (1917), p. 37; (1930), p. 1.

*532 171 serpent, spirit children and the increase of natural species. At certain seasons of the year, the aborigines repaint the *Wandjina* to ensure that rain will fall, and the spirit children will leave the body of the rainbow-serpent to become human beings.

But these *Wandjina* figures dominate the art only within a limited area. As one moves further east, particularly around Napier Broome Bay,[22] some of the caves are filled with many strange figures of human beings, which bear more than a passing resemblance to cave paintings in western Arnhem Land. Still further east again, at the headwaters of the Gregory River,[23] there are large twelve-foot figures of mythical men, also associated with rain and rain-making. Other figures in the adjacent caves are naturalistic, depicting men, women, and the animals of the country.

It is in Arnhem Land, however, that the most interesting and varied forms of aboriginal art have been found. These will be described in the following pages.

1. THE FUNCTION OF PRIMITIVE ART

*532 121 There are two schools of thought on the function of primitive art. One contends that to paint pictures is a propensity of the human mind, and that all true art, either primitive or modern, is a spontaneous activity carried out for its own sake. The other school takes the opposite view, and claims that primitive man is essentially practical; that he paints pictures, say of kangaroos, not specifically because he takes pleasure in the act, but because by so doing he gains a magical control over the creature and can thereby capture it more easily.

My research into the art of the Australian aborigines has convinced me that their art is predominantly non-magical, that is, the aborigines paint because they want to, and not for some material advantage. In a number of places in Australia, however, magic is definitely associated with some aspects of the art, e.g. among the Luritja tribes of Central Australia,[24] and some tribes of north-western Australia.[25] The same holds true of the art of Arnhem Land and especially Oenpelli where, although most of the cave art is purely representational and non-magical, there are certain cave paintings associated with malignant magic and food increase ceremonies.

A review of the evidence gathered from the examination of the cave paintings, bark paintings, ceremonial objects and body decorations of Arnhem Land, suggests that the art of this area can be roughly divided into four classes. (i) art for art's sake, in which the artist paints pictures in caves or on sheets of bark for the pleasure which he gains in so doing; (ii) sacred art, such as is seen in the decorations of the body and of the ceremonial objects;[26] (iii) magical paintings, by means of which the aborigines believe they can control nature, punish enemies, and increase the supply of the food animals;[27] and (iv) didactic bark paintings,

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[22] Mountford (1937), pp. 30-40.

[23] Davidson (1936), p. 64.

[24] Mountford (1943), p. 95.

[25] Love (1930), p. 3; Elkin (1930), p. 277.

[26] p. 400.

[27] See Pl. 62B.

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used at the initiation and age-grading ceremonies to teach the young men the myths and folk-ways of the tribe.[28]

2. ART STYLES AND DISTRIBUTION IN ARNHEM LAND[29]

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The basic art of Arnhem Land, which consists of single or multiple figures on a plain ground, covers the greater part of that area, extending from Groote Eylandt in the east, to the western edge of Arnhem Land, southward as far as the upper Roper River, where it meets the simple, abstract art of Central Australia, and northward, until it is absorbed by the more advanced art of the north-east. Pl. 20D, from Groote Eylandt, is a typical example of the basic art.

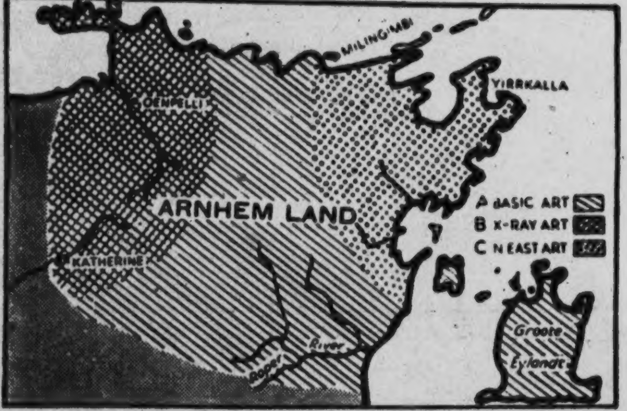

FIG. 2. Distribution of art styles in Arnhem Land

Although, on the western edge of Arnhem Land, this art still consists of single or multiple figures on a plain ground, it is modified by the curious X-ray art. In this, the internal as well as the external details of the creature are shown (Pl. 75B).

As far as we know this X-ray art occupies a limited area, extending from Goulburn Island[30] in the north, along the western edge of Arnhem Land, to possibly the Katherine River. It does not extend far east or west (Fig. 2B).

The more complex art of north-eastern Arnhem Land seems to be confined to an area extending from Blue Mud Bay, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, to Cape Stewart in the north (Fig. 2C).

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[28] This was the practice at Oenpelli, p. 224. Warner (1937), p. 318, describes 'a bark house . . . on the ceremonial grounds. . . . The interior walls are painted with realistic and geometric figures (which illustrate the story of the two Wawilak sisters).' Although Warner does not say so, it is likely that these bark paintings, like those the aborigines told me about at Oenpelli, were used to instruct initiates in the tribal myths.

[29] Distribution Map, Fig. 2.

[30] Mountford (1939a), Pl. 14-17.

*532 •171 The characteristics of the north-eastern art differ from those of the other areas in that the arrangement of the figures is more complex, the craftsmanship of a higher order, and the empty spaces of the background usually filled in with cross-hatching. Pl. 88A is typical.

Between the west, with its X-ray art, and the north-east, with its complicated forms, is an intermediate area centred around the Liverpool River which embodies many of the characteristics of the art on either side of it (Pl. 73D).

Although, within any one area, there are differences due to individual artists, the traditional art style remains the same.

3. MEDIUMS OF EXPRESSION

The aborigines of Arnhem Land express their art in several different mediums: (i) paintings on bark; (ii) paintings in caves and shallow rock shelters; (iii) figures carved in wood or moulded in wax; (iv) figures moulded or drawn in wet sea-sand; and (v) figures in bark.

(i) PAINTINGS ON BARK

Scattered references in early literature indicate that the practice of painting on bark was widespread in the southern part of Australia. As early as 1807 Péron's artist,[31] in his sketch of a burial-place on Maria Island, Tasmania, showed painted sheets of bark near by. Bunce[32] also refers to them. Smyth[33] mentions their use on the Wonnangatta River, Gippsland, and Curr[34] on the Paroo River, central New South Wales. In Arnhem Land, the aborigines make their paintings on the inside of their bark huts during the enforced idleness of the rainy season. Spencer[35] was the first to notice them at Oenpelli. It is likely that, wherever the aborigines constructed their huts with sheets of bark, they would have painted designs on the inside of them. However, no painting taken from an Arnhem Land bark shelter would be more than a year old because, long before the onset of the next wet season, it would have been destroyed by the elements, insects or fire.

The bark paintings in the expedition collection, and, in fact, most of those housed in the various universities and museums, have never been part of a wet-weather shelter, but have been made at the request of the investigator.

(ii) PAINTINGS IN CAVES AND SHALLOW ROCK SHELTERS

The cave paintings in Arnhem Land were all found in shallow caves or rock shelters. In Australia, we have no knowledge of paintings in deep caves, such as those made by prehistoric man in Europe.

In some respects the cave paintings of Arnhem Land were more interesting than the bark paintings for, whereas the latter depict the art styles of the present

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[31] Péron (1807-16), Pl. 15.

[32] Bunce (1857), pp. 49-50.

[33] Smyth (1878), p. 292.

[34] Curr (1886), p. 273.

[35] Spencer (1928), p. 792.

[text continues on p. 10]

* 532 day, in many cave paintings the motifs and styles are different from those now in use.

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(iii) FIGURES CARVED IN WOOD OR MOULDED IN WAX

Although carving in the round extends far beyond Arnhem Land,[36] it appears to have reached its highest development in the north-eastern area. The aborigines in and around Yirrkalla also make excellent models in wax. The tribes of Cape York[37] are expert in the same technique.

(iv) FIGURES MOULDED OR DRAWN IN WET SEA-SAND

[857] The aboriginal children of north-eastern Arnhem Land are skilled in both drawing and moulding various creatures in the wet sand of the seashore.[38] As the children of Central Australia also draw designs on the sides of drifting sandhills, it is almost certain that this practice has a much wider distribution than present evidence indicates.

(v) FIGURES IN BARK

The aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land make small human figures by binding the soft paper-bark together with string. Worms[39] records similar figures from north-western Australia.

I. TECHNIQUES

386 The materials used in the production of the bark and cave paintings are: (i) Colours: red, yellow, black and white ochres; (ii) fixative; (iii) brushes; (iv) flat, dried sheets of bark.

(i) COLOURS

The pigments used to paint the designs on the bark sheets, or on the cave walls, were red, yellow, black and white. Although I did not specifically ask the name of the colours at Groote Eylandt, Tindale[40] gives the names of those employed there as white, *tonguru*; yellow, *otarah*; black, *udumach*; and red, *maruwuna*. The red was traded from the mainland to Groote Eylandt, the other colours being obtained locally. Rose[41] also refers to trade in red ochre with the mainland tribes. Since the war, the Groote Eylandters have learned that carbon from dry batteries discarded by the Air Force makes an excellent black. This was used extensively both on the bark paintings collected by the expedition and those described by Adam.[42]

At Yirrkalla, the aborigines used four pigments, red, white, yellow and black. The first two belong to the *dua* and the latter to the *jiritja* moiety. Red, *murngun*, and white, *kapun*, are plentiful in the cliffs at Yirrkalla. It can, however,

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[36] Mountford (1951), p. 87, Pl. 1.
[37] McConnel (1935), Pl. 27, Fig. F.
[38] Barrett and Croll (1943), Pl. 11, facing p. 70.
[39] Worms (1942), Fig. 6.
[40] Tindale (1925), p. 116.
[41] Rose (1942), p. 70.
[42] Adam (1951), p. 109.

be gathered only by the *dua* men who give it to those of the opposite moiety. 386
Yellow, *kadangul*, and black, *tjunupul*, come from localities near Gurunga.[13] The 616
collection of the yellow pigments is associated with a ceremony in which men of the *jiritja* moiety only can take part. The *jiritja* distribute these pigments to the *dua* men.

At Oenpelli, most of the colours are obtained by trade. The best red ochre, 171
gunaitdai, comes from a totemic place, Widitjan, about eight days journey south. If this ochre is in short supply, the aborigines use an inferior local ochre. For white, the aborigines use a stone, *outjain* (unidentified), which they first grind into a paste and, when it is partly dry, mould into small cakes. In this form, the pigment is traded over long distances. The yellow ochre, *maragaratum*, which is soft and easily ground, comes from some unidentified place to the far south. I did not gather any details about the source of the black, called *manmai-jungarin*. Apparently it is in short supply because it is rare in both the bark and cave paintings of the Oenpelli area.

Throughout Arnhem Land the pigments are ground, with water, on rough 386
flat stones. One stone is generally reserved for the white pigment. Cockle and 531
small bailer shells are often used as paint pots. Both Tindale[14] and Spencer[15] state that the aborigines mix their pigments to get different shades. At the time of my visit to Groote Eylandt, Yirrkalla and Oenpelli the aborigines were not mixing their colours, the different pebbles of red and yellow ochres accounting for the varying shades of red and yellow in the paintings.

(ii) FIXATIVE

The juice of one of the tree orchids (*Dendrobium* sp.) is used by the Arnhem 531
landers as a fixative on both the bark and the cave paintings. The orchid bulb is 824
cut in halves, broken slightly by chewing, and, in the Oenpelli and Yirrkalla areas, rubbed directly on the bark or rock surface, or in Groote Eylandt, mixed with the colour on the grinding stone. This method of holding the colour is effective as long as the pigments are applied thinly; if not, they tend to flake off.

(iii) BRUSHES

The aboriginal artists of Arnhem Land use three kinds of brushes: 531

(a) A narrow strip of bark, chewed at one end (Fig. 3F). This is held as in 413
Fig. 3C: and used for the broad lines.

(b) A cylindrical stick (Fig. 3E), about three thirty-seconds of an inch in diameter, and three inches long, which has the end slightly burred. With this the artist makes the dots. The brush is tapped on the grinding stone to load it with colour, which is transferred to the painting with the brush held as shown in Fig. 3B.

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[13] See myth of Gurunga, p. 371.

[14] Tindale (1926), p. 117.

[15] Spencer (1928), p. 792.

hut to punish the women. When the women saw the enraged serpent approaching, they sang many magical songs[51] and danced many powerful dances, to send the serpent back to his waterhole, but he still came on. In desperation, the women went inside and blocked the openings of their hut with bark and leaves to keep *jurlungur* at bay. But the serpent pushed his head inside, swallowed the child, then the younger and finally the elder sister. He then returned to the waterhole, but later came again to the surface and regurgitated the women and child, whose bodies are now large rocks. 773* 776

On Pl. 88A, the rectangle at the top represents the bark hut built by the women. Within are the two *Wawalik* sisters and the newly-born child. *Jurlungur*, at the bottom, *a*, is leaving his sacred well. In the next position the serpent has encircled the hut, thrust his head inside and swallowed the child. On the lower right, he is returning to the sacred well of Mirrirmina after having swallowed the whole family. 773* 776 532*

The designs on either side of *jurlungur* at *a* represent the water in the sacred Mirrirmina well. The central parallel lines, with the footmarks between them, indicate the path of the women leading to the hut. The design to the left of the path symbolizes the blood which offended *jurlungur*, and that to the left, dry ground. The designs on the right-hand edge of the painting again represent the water in the sacred well of Mirrirmina.

Banaitja and his Son, or Counterpart, Laitjun, at Blue Mud Bay

Banaitja[52] and his son, or counterpart, *Laitjun*, are to the *jiritja* moiety of eastern Arnhem Land what *Djunkgao*, his sister *Madalait* and the *Wawalik* sisters are to the *dua*. Neither the mythology nor the ceremonies of *Banaitja* and *Laitjun* are as varied or as extensive as those of the *dua* ancestors. 616 773*

Banaitja came from the south-west[53] to Blue Mud Bay during the time that ordinary men and women lived in the world. He was a huge man, with deep chest and long powerful limbs, who always carried a long spear, called *balinin*, and a spear-thrower, on one end of which was a tassel of human hair.[54] As he walked around the countryside he shouted 'Wah-wah' in a voice so loud that 773*

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[51] One of the songs which the sisters sang is still used by the women in the *ulmark* ceremonies when they hear the sound of the log gong. This sound is supposed to be the voice of the serpent (Warner, 1937, p. 311).

[52] In some of the myths *Banaitja* recreated himself in the name of *Laitjun*, in another he is the father of *Laitjun*, and in still another he travelled as *Banaitja* through a number of localities, including Cape Arnhem. The fact, however, that Warner (1937), p. 364, in his description of the *jiritja narra* ceremonies of Milingimbi refers only casually to *Banaitja*, and makes no reference whatever to *Laitjun*, suggests both that the *Banaitja* myth is unimportant in the Milingimbi area, and that the creation of *Laitjun* is only a local development in the Blue Mud Bay area.

[53] The carved figure of *Banaitja*, Pl. 135A, B, shows him to be sub-incised. As sub-incision is not practised in Arnhem Land, this would suggest that the *Banaitja* myth extends south into the area of sub-incision. [304]

[54] A similar spear-thrower was used by the members of the *wirinikapuna* moiety (equivalent to the *jiritja*) during the ceremonial bathing of the *amawaltja* rituals of Groote Eylandt, p. 56. [171]

This was a signal for a number of *Bukalatji* men, who were hiding among the 773*
trees, to attack the unsuspecting *Muruma* and spear him to death. His body is 532*
now a rock which projects out of the sea near the shore at Jalboa (map, Fig. 57). [823]

Two bark paintings illustrate the mythical story.

The central figure in Pl. 96A is *Muruma*. In one hand he holds four fish and in the other a twin-barbed fishing spear with which he has transfixed another fish. The crescents above his head and on the left-hand side of the painting represent curious loop-like clouds, *wulmu*.[96] The circles and cones along the right and left-hand edges are also clouds. In the upper part of the painting *Muruma* is asleep under a tree, with the fish (upper left) cooking on the fire, *a*, beside him.*

Plate 96D deals with the death of *Muruma* at the hands of the *Bukalatji*. In the centre is *Muruma* spearing fish and stingrays. In the lower left he is resting by his camp-fire, around which are the fish he is cooking. The *Bukalatji* are grouped along the upper edge. At the right, the unfortunate *Muruma* is being speared by one of the *Bukalatji*. Already there are many spears in his body.

Nakundia and Mununatan

Nakundia and *Mununatan* were two fishermen who once lived at Blue Mud Bay. One day, on returning to their camp after a day's fishing, they were set upon and speared to death by aborigines from a hostile group.

In the lower right panel, *a*, of Pl. 96C are *Nakundia* (lower) and *Mununatan* (upper), both with a large fish in each hand. Above them is their canoe with the sail set. The next two panels to the left are the oval ceremonial grounds,
similar to those used in the *arawaltja* ceremonies of Groote Eylandt (Fig. 6). Still [171]
further left is one of the fishermen standing on a rock, shown as an oval beneath his feet, with a fish in each hand. Above him are five fishing lines with hooks and sinkers attached. In the lower left, *b*, of the left-hand lower panel, one man (unidentified) is spearing another (possibly referring to the death of either *Mununatan* or *Nakundia*). There are six spears to the left of this group. The designs on the upper half at *c* are totemic rocks and a palm tree, upper right.

The men responsible for the death of *Nakundia* and *Mununatan* are shown
in the central transverse panel *d*, while in the upper left panel, *e*, are the two [411]
dead fishermen transfixed with spears. At the right of the same panel are many
fighting spears of a type used only in avenging ceremonies. 796]

Minjapa and Wuluwil, the Turtle Fishermen

Two mythical fishermen, *Minjapa* and *Wuluwil*, one day captured a large turtle. They brought it into Jalboa, about three miles north-west of Yirrkalla,[97]

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[96] These clouds, *wulmu*, also belong to the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*, Pl. 90D. It is [776
evident that *Muruma* and *Tjambuwal*, both belonging to the *dua* moiety, are associated in the 616]
mythical stories.

* Reproduced in *Australia: Aboriginal Paintings—Arnhem Land*, 1954, Pl. XXVI.

[97] This is also the totemic place of *Tjambuwal*, the thunder-man, and *Muruma*, the fisherman.

*773 at each end, their holes. Cross-hatched panels *f, f, f,* represent the paths made *532 by the *gunjun* crabs as they ran from one hole to another.

The turtle track has now been transformed into a group of red and yellow sand-hills and the holes of the *gunjun* crabs into low bushes.

● 171
(a) THE CONCEPTION BELIEFS

842 787 Throughout the eastern side of Arnhem Land the aborigines believe the spirit child visits the father in a dream and asks to be directed to his future mother. The sources from which these children spring, however, vary with the different localities.

At Groote Eylandt, the children travel on the winds, those of the *wirirrikapara* moiety on the *mamariga* (south-east) wind,[9] and those of the *uranikapara* (equivalent to the *jiritja* on the mainland) on the *bara* (north-east) wind.[10] The little spirit child hides in the grass until it has an opportunity of visiting the father in a dream and asking him for a mother.

At Milingimbi, Warner[11] states, the spirit child, who has been living in the totemic well in the form of a small fish, asks the sleeping father the name of its mother. The father points her out, the child enters her body and starts life as a human being.

184 It was at Yirrkalla, however, that I was able to obtain, through the medium 842 of the bark paintings, a more complete account of the conception beliefs.

616 *532
(i) *The Conception Beliefs of the Dua Moiety of Yirrkalla*

The people of the *dua* moiety believe that when *Tjambuwal*, the thunder-man, creates the rain clouds he places in them a number of spirit children, *jurtu*. These *jurtu*, who are so small that only the medicine-men can see them, descend on the raindrops to the land, or the sea. If on the land, the little *jurtu* enter one of the various *dua* yams, fruits, and especially the *dua jarupung* or *firawar* wild honey; if the *jurtu* falls in the sea, it inhabits the *dua* fish or the green turtles. The little child spirits of *Tjambuwal* will not have anything to do with *jiritja* foods.

One day, as shown in the painting, two men catch a green turtle, bring it to the shore and cut it up so that everyone can have a meal. The cutting up of the [787] turtle releases the *dua* spirit child living in its body. That night, when everyone is asleep, the spirit child, *jurtu*, visits one of the men in a dream and says:

'You are my father. *Tjambuwal* put me in the turtle you cut up today, so that I could find a mother. Where is she?'

[575] The father points out one of his wives, whom he has been told has ceased menstruating: the child enters her body and starts a terrestrial existence. Next morning the father, if he remembers the dream (the aboriginal men said that it was not often that they did), says to his wife:

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[9] Myth of *mamariga* wind, Pl. 24D.

[10] Myth of *bara* wind, Pl. 24B.

[11] Warner (1937), p. 21.

(b) DEATH AND BURIAL

There are three important events in the life of every male aboriginal of 844
Arnhem Land—in fact, in the life of any tribalized Australian aboriginal: birth, 881
when he leaves the land of the spirits and enters the every-day world; initiation, 764
when he is admitted into the sacred or ritualistic world, where age makes him
increasingly important; and death, when he leaves the every-day world, and again 561
enters into the land of the spirits.

Although there are few rituals associated with birth, those of initiation and the later age-grading ceremonies are long and complicated, for it is by these ceremonies that men are admitted deeper and deeper into the secret life of the tribe.

At death, the burial rituals extend over many weeks, their purpose being not 764
only to send the spirit so happily to its future home that it will not be a danger [775]
to the living, but also to allow the living to adjust themselves to their loss.

The burial ceremonies at Yirrkalla have three main phases: (i) the ceremonies at death, (ii) the cleansing of the bones, and (iii) the final burial, after which the spirit of the dead leaves for its aboriginal 'heaven'. If the dead are of the [616
dua moiety, the spirit goes to Purelko, and if of the *jiritja*, to Nalkuma. 775]

(i) *The Ceremonies at Death*

When a man dies his relatives gather round the dead body, wailing loudly, [152]
the women cutting their scalps with sharpened bones until the blood flows freely.
After a short period of wailing the men form a group apart from the women [533]
and chant the long series of songs which belong to the totemic group of their
dead companion. Next morning the men proceed with the rites of burial, first [302]
by rubbing red ochre over the body of the corpse, and on that painting his
totemic design.[13] The men also make two bark effigies[14] which they put under the arms of the corpse. They explain to him that the effigies are his children, whom they have killed and placed beside him to prevent him being lonely and wishing to return to haunt the living. The corpse is then wrapped in a thick layer of paper-bark and tied with string.

While all this is being done, other men are erecting a platform of logs about 617
five feet in height and covering it with a layer of leaves. Then, while the men 764
chant another series of totemic songs belonging to the dead man, two aborigines

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[13] This totemic design is the same as that painted on his body during circumcision. See [304]
body paintings associated with circumcision, Pl. 128. Warner (1937), pp. 415-16, in his description and interpretation of the mortuary rituals of the Murngin, an adjacent people, records that the totemic design is painted on the body of the dead man so that the spirits, or *Mokoi*, can identify him.

[14] Similar to the bark figures, Fig. 65C, D. Frazer (1936), p. 59, records: 'In Tahiti . . . [171]
the priest took a number of small slips of plantain leaf-stalk, fixed two or three pieces under each arm of the corpse, placed a few on the breast, and then, addressing the corpse, said, "There are your family, there is your child, there is your wife, there is your father, and there is your mother. Be satisfied yonder (that is, in the world of the spirits). Look not toward those who are left in this world."'

417

764 climb to the top of the platform and, taking the corpse from those below, lay it on the bed of leaves,[15] face upwards.

764 775 [534] As the two men descend, others blow a wooden trumpet informing the *Mokoi*[16] of the death, knowing that they will take the spirit from the locality for a time so that it will not be a danger to its living relatives. At the same time another man climbs a tall tree and makes a noise like the night-bird, *kawawak* (associated with the *Mokoi*).[17] As soon as the aboriginal in the tree hears the *Mokoi* coming (they make a coughing sound) he descends quickly and with the rest of the mourners runs quickly from the burial ground. This is done, not only to make the dead man's spirit go with the *Mokoi*, but because the *Mokoi*, particularly that of the newly dead man, are dangerous to the living.

(ii) *The Cleansing of the Bones*

764 For the next two or three months no one goes to the burial platform. When, however, putrefaction is complete, the maggots from the body have entered the ground and turned into blowflies, the aborigines meet to perform the second phase in the burial rituals, the cleansing of the bones.[18]

[533] Totemic dances belonging to the clan of the dead man are performed to the accompaniment of much singing, the beating of music sticks and the blowing of the wooden trumpet. The noise of these rituals is supposed to scare the spirit of the dead man and his ghostly attendants, the *Mokoi*, from the burial platform. The body is lifted from the platform or, if an earth burial, exhumed and a curious ritual performed over it, in which two men sit, one on either side of the corpse, whilst a third thrusts a spear into it, saying that he has speared a turtle.[19] The women, who have been sitting at one side, then come forward, take the skeleton apart, wash the bones in water and wrap them in paper-bark to remove the smell. At the end of three days the women unwrap the bones, rub them with red ochre and place them in a temporary bark coffin, on the outside of which the men have painted the totemic symbols of the deceased.[20]

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[15] If when a man dies there are only a few people present, the corpse is wrapped in paper bark and buried in the ground.

[774] 779 [16] The *Mokoi* (*jiritja*) and *Wuna* (*dua*) are spirits living in the jungle, who are always seeking souls of the newly-dead for company. A dead person has two spirits, one, *wakinu*, which finally goes to a distant 'heaven' (p. 326) and one which stays on earth. The latter are the *Mokoi*. (See Warner (1937), p. 446; also p. 338.) There are, however, many kinds of *Mokoi*, and our information about them is very limited.

[17] See ceremonial staff of *kawawak*, Pl. 134E.

[18] See description of bark coffins, p. 317.

[19] The significance of this ritual is obscure. Warner (1937), p. 443, refers to it. A similar ritual is supposed to be carried out at Purelko, the final resting place of the *dua* dead, p. 325.

[171] [20] Frazer (1936), p. 5, mentions that, 'In Misol, a small island to the north-west of New Guinea. . . the body, wrapped in clothes, is deposited on a scaffold built for it in the forest. From time to time the relations come to inspect the corpse until decomposition is complete. The skeleton is then brought to the place, generally a cave, where the bones of all the dead inhabitants of the village are collected.' This is a similar burial custom to that carried out by the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land and might well be the source from which the Arnhem Land custom originated.

THE ART OF YIRRKALLA

The Serpent, Kundura[35]

Two temporary bark coffins belonging to a man of the *kundura*, snake, totem were made and painted by the same artist. Though the designs on the two coffins are similar in appearance, they relate to different parts of the same myth. 764 773* 532*

During creation times there were a number of mythical *kundura* snakes in north-eastern Arnhem Land. One *kundura* lived in the mangrove swamps at a place called Baimaruna, south of Milingimbi. Whilst there, he swallowed two women and a child.[36] Later, when the *kundura* moved his camp to Tualki, at Arnhem Bay, he vomited up the dead people. Two other mythical *kundura* (Pl. 104A) made their camp at Karami, in the forest country near Arnhem Bay. They were quiet people and did not interfere with anyone. The Milingimbi *kundura* lived at Tualki for some time before he invited the two *kundura* at Karami, who were then man and wife, to stay with him. When they agreed to do so, they all changed themselves into the present-day harmless python of that name which lives among the rocks.

The coffin designs on Pl. 104C deal with the Milingimbi *kundura* snakes which moved to Tualki, a mangrove swamp at Arnhem Bay. The transverse panel, *a*, is a fresh-water stream. When the tide is out, this stream flows down the central watercourse *c*, filling the swamps, panels *d* and *e*, with fresh water. At high tide the water flows from the sea, panel *f*, along watercourse *c*, in the opposite direction, replacing the fresh water in the swamps with salt water. The painting on the coffin shows two *kundura* in each swamp. The design at the head of the snake on panel *e* is their camp.

Plate 104A, although similar in design to C, deals with the section of the myth in which two *kundura* snakes camped in the forest country at Karami, Arnhem Bay. In panel *a* are two of the *kundura* snakes, the crescent at the head of the one on the left representing their dry-season camp. The transverse lines of cross-hatching on panels *a* and *b* are symbolical of the ribs of the snakes.[37]

Whilst engaged on archaeological research at Milingimbi, F. M. Setzler and F. D. McCarthy collected three log coffins, together with a simple interpretation of the designs.

Fresh-water Tortoise, Mimala

Plate 105A, B belongs to a man of the *mimala*, fresh-water tortoise, totemic group. The main figure is the fresh-water tortoise.[38] The pear-shaped designs near the head and on the right are fresh-water snakes, called *tjalning*. The holes cut through the upper end of the coffin are the 'eyes' of the coffin.[39] In these the mourners sometimes place the long leg bones of the dead man. The prongs 764 532*

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[35] The snake, *kundura*, is also known by the aborigines of Groote Eylandt, Pl. 25F.

[36] This bears some resemblance to the myth of the *julunggul* serpent which swallowed the *Wawilak* sisters, p. 270; Warner (1937), p. 250.

[37] The convention of showing the ribs of snakes external to the body, a simple form of X-ray art, is not unusual. See Pl. 7C and Fig. 5 from Central Australia.

[38] See bark painting, Pl. 126A, and engraved pipe, Fig. 30D, belonging to *mimala*.

[39] Warner (1937), p. 441.

that they can help the spirits of the newly dead on their journey to Nalkuma, 776*
Wulu-wulu giving them the bean of the *menin* tree,[90] a passport into the *jiritja* 532*
heaven, and *Kultana* assisting to paddle them across the sea to their future 775
home.[91]

The Mokoi and the Turtle Hunt

Plate 110E is the story of a turtle hunt by some of the *Mokoi* who had paddled 773*
in a wooden canoe from Nalkuma to Cape Arnhem, and the incidents connected 532*
with the hunt.

The three *Mokoi* paddled through rough water (four cross-hatched rectangles, 776
a, on left of right-hand panel) to reach a group of rocks (squares with diagonal lines at *b*) so that they could spear the turtles living among those rocks. On their way the spirit-men saw a devil-ray, *b* (*Daemonata alfredi*).[92] The large gills are shown as slits, and the fat within the body as a crescent. In the left panel are dugongs, *merinjunga*, feeding on the submarine grass, *gumata*. The fish are *tinimbu*, queen fish, and squares with diagonal lines, rocks in the sea frequented by the turtles, upper edge.

The Mokoi and the Dugong, Merinjunga

Two mythical dugongs, *merinjunga* (*Dugong australis*), which once lived in
the sea at Cape Arnhem were continuously being pursued by the *Mokoi* who
came from the *jiritja* heaven, Nalkuma. The *Mokoi*, however, were not always
successful because, just as they were about to spear the creatures, a storm would
develop and allow the dugongs to escape.[93] Later the canoe was transformed
into a large rock on the sea coast between Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw, 823
and the dugongs into a rock in the water near by. The place of the stingray,
which also appears in the painting, is a hole in the ground. When travelling
in their canoes the aborigines will not go near the totemic place of the dugong,
for if they did the dugongs would send up so much smoke and fire that they
would be destroyed.

On the land, near this totemic place, is a paper-bark tree, once a dugong, 778
which resembles that creature in appearance, and near by is a termite mound 787
also a transformed dugong. When the aborigines wish to increase the supply of
dugongs at a particular locality they take a branch from the dugong tree and a 825
piece of earth from the termite mound and throw them both into the fire. When the wood is burnt to ash the men take the heated termite earth from the fire, pound it into dust, mix it with the wood ash and throw the mixture into the sea where the dugongs feed. This dust from the totemic tree and the termite mound will create many dugongs in that locality.[94]

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[90] Pl. 108C. [91] Myth, p. 331.

[92] This huge, cumbersome but harmless sea-creature sometimes reaches a length of fifteen feet and a weight of a ton. 136

[93] Dugongs can only be captured on windless days when the sea is calm. 225

[94] This increase ritual is not unlike that carried out at the increase centre for parrot-fish at Winchelsea Island, p. 84. 171

*773 825 journeyed northward until they reached the Kariatpa swamps[28] at Caledon Bay. These were so full of fish that the reptiles decided to make it their permanent camp. Being cold and uncomfortable the crocodiles, with the aid of the blanket lizard, made a fire and were just sitting down to warm themselves, when a little bird, *djiriku*, came along and asked if he could join them. But he had no sooner stretched out to get warm than the fire exploded, scattering embers everywhere. This gave the creatures a great fright; the *barau* dived into the water and even today, as crocodiles, seldom come to land; *baltjira* changed himself into a lizard and ran up the trunk of a tree; and the little bird, *djiriku*, was burnt so badly that his feathers are now a reddish-brown colour.[29] The fire went underground but the smoke, according to the aborigines, still rises from a hole in the ground near the Kariatpa swamps.[30]

*773 825 One engraved pipe and a bark painting deal with the myth of the crocodile, *barau*. The pipe is described elsewhere.[31]

*532 Plate 117B illustrates the crocodile and its nest at the Kariatpa swamps of Caledon Bay. The vertical lines of lozenge shapes, *a*, *a*,[32] are leaves of the spike rush, and the horizontal lines, *b*, *b*, the places where the crocodile pushed the grass aside as it walked through the swamp. On the lower right, at *c*, is the crocodile's nest covered with grass. The lozenges within the nest are eggs and those at each end the grass which the crocodile pulled over the nest to hide its eggs.

The Dua Snakes of the Tjutjulili Swamps of Trial Bay

*773 825 [816] At the beginning of time, all the dangerous snakes belonging to the *dua* moiety lived in a cave situated on an open plain called Tjutjulili, near Trial Bay. They had as their leader a female snake, *dunbania*, who is now the tiger snake.

On the seashore near by there was a tribe of peaceful fish people who gained their living from the sea. One day, before they went to an adjacent mangrove creek to fish, they put some crabs to cook on the fire. When later they returned to camp, tired and hungry, they found that the *guludjuru*, called the 'dogs' of the snakes, had taken the food from the fire and eaten it. The fishers were so annoyed that they tracked the 'dogs' and killed them. When the snakes heard of this, they were most indignant and, arming themselves with spears, set out, with the tiger snake woman at their head, to punish the fish people. They, being

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[28] Map, Fig. 57.

[29] Mountford (1948), p. 20, records a Pitjandjara myth which states that the present markings of many of the small desert birds and reptiles are the result of burns received in a bush fire.

● [17] [30] See myth of the lizard-man and fire. There is also an Aranda myth of Central Australia which states that smoke issues from the ground at a place west of Alice Springs where there had been an extensive bush-fire during creation times. Similarly, in the northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia the myths relate how, after the snake *akaru* rose from the summit of Mt Fitton, the mountain has given out smoke ever since. As there are no active volcanoes in Australia, it may be that these myths are a tribal memory of seismic activity with which the aborigines were associated in the long distant past. Mountford (1937, 1942), field notes.

[31] Engraved pipe, Fig. 78.

[32] This is a *gumatj mata* design, Fig. 61B.

The Saw-fish, Nalgun

Plate 127C belongs to the saw-fish, *nalgun*, totem of Milingimbi. Four saw-fish are depicted, two in the upper panel at *a*, *a*, and two in the lower at *b*, *b*. In the lower panel a fresh-water tortoise is shown between the tails of the saw-fish. Scattered throughout the drawing are small star-like designs which represent the star-fish, *midjala*. These fish provide food for the tortoises. The oval designs between the star-fish represent seaweed, *djiwul*, and the dots, its fruit. The two fish on the right side of the upper panel are called by the native name of *wungulbu*, and the three transverse cross-hatched panels, *c*, *c*, *c*, are sand-bars near the totemic place. There are three flying fish, *digar*, at the upper edge of the bark painting. 532 778 823

The Turtle, Wilira

The totemic place of the turtle, *wilira*, pictured in Pl. 127D, is an island called Nulgunin-numa, situated north-west of Elcho Island. The triangular patterns occupying most of the surface of the bark painting are clouds created by the three turtles spraying water into the sky. Two king-fish are shown in the clouds, one at *a* and one at *b*.

2. SMOKING PIPES AND MYTHS 177

As far as I am aware the long smoking pipe, Fig. 59A, B, is used in Australia only by the aborigines of Arnhem Land and the adjacent islands. 276 [171]

Tobacco smoking was introduced by the Malays within the last century or so when they visited Australia during their periodical journeys to collect trepang and pearl shell, though the *Baijini* myth suggests that the aborigines may have become acquainted with tobacco at an even earlier date. After the Commonwealth Government, about 1910, prohibited the Malays from coming to Australia the aborigines continued to use the Malay pipe, smoking either a substitute or European tobacco, occasionally issued by white traders and missionaries. [648] [439] [797]

In general, the pipes[70] are made in a few minutes from the pithy stem of a shrub (*Guettarda speciosa*). The aboriginal removes the pith with a thin stick, plugs one end with bark, cuts a hole in the side an inch or more from the end, fits a bowl[71] saved from the old pipe, and, except for the engraving, the pipe is complete. 276 [824]

The pipes I collected are about an inch in diameter and varied in length from eight inches at Groote Eylandt to thirty inches at Yirrkalla, Fig. 59B. It was necessary to have a longer pipe stem at Yirrkalla so that there would be sufficient room for the totemic designs. In use, Pl. 124D, the aboriginal takes a [171]

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[70] The bowls of the early pipes were made of tin-plate and carefully treasured. Since the last war, most pipe bowls are made from shortened cartridge cases. As mentioned earlier, the aborigines recognize the difference between the *Baijini* pipes, which are similar to those used by Europeans, and those of the Malays. The *Baijini* were a mysterious group of fair-skinned people who once camped at Port Bradshaw, myth, p. 333. [177]

[71] Warner (1937), p. 461, refers to the smoking pipes of the Murngin, near Milingimbi, and Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 102, to those at Yirrkalla.

[text continues on p. 391]

276 pinch of tobacco, presses it tightly into the bowl, and lights it either with a coal from the camp-fire, or a burning twig. He fills his mouth and lungs with tobacco smoke, then passes the pipe to a companion, who does likewise. This usually exhausts the supply of tobacco, but if there is any left the pipe is either passed to another aboriginal or back to the first man.

276 532* [171] Most of the smoking pipes at both Groote Eylandt and Yirrkalla are covered with engravings. Those at Groote Eylandt had herring-bone patterns which did not appear to have any specific meaning, but those at Yirrkalla and Milingimbi all bore complex designs, most of them illustrating totemic stories belonging to the sacred life of the men. Because of this, the owners kept the stems wrapped in paper-bark, Fig. 59A, so that the decorations could not be seen by the women when the pipes were used in the main camp. The bark painting of *Wanatpu*, Pl. 95B, shows him holding a Malay pipe in either hand.

As the engravings on the Yirrkalla pipes entailed considerable time and effort, the aborigines were not always willing to part with them. They allowed me, however, to make rubbings of the patterns. These are reproduced in the text figures.

The Crocodile, Baron

[778 803] This pipe, Fig. 59C, is associated with a *jiritja* totem place of the crocodiles, *baron*, which is on the Kariatpa[72] swamp, Caledon Bay.

The diamond-shaped designs in panel *c* of Fig. 59C are the swamps at Blue Mud Bay. The next panel shows the crocodiles, *b*, lying in the swamps at Kariatpa. Round the reptiles, the designs *a*, *a* represent swamp grass and crocodile eggs.[73] The two lines of lozenge-shaped designs at *d*, *d* are the Kariatpa swamps.

The Fresh-water Tortoise, Mimala

773* When the fresh-water tortoise, *Mimala*, and his wife were human beings they lived at Calabaibai, a totemic place on the banks of a fresh-water stream flowing into the sea south of Milingimbi.[74] One day the fresh-water tortoise made a carved human figure, *mimalatuna*, which he carried a long way inland and hid in a sacred place where no women could see it. Being tired after his journey, *Mimala* laid down and went to sleep. On waking up he found he was particularly warm and comfortable, for his body had sunk so deeply in the soft mud that he was almost covered. He saw, too, that the surrounding country was covered with swamp grass and rushes, interspersed with many streams of fresh water. *Mimala*, pleased with the warmth of the mud and the close proximity of so much grass and water, changed himself, and later his wife, into fresh-water tortoises.

From that time the tortoise, *mimala*, has lived either in the fresh-water streams and swamps or the grass that grows near by.

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[72] Myth, p. 368.
[73] These are similar to the *mata* design of the *gumaitj* language group of Caledon Bay.
[74] See log coffin, Pl. 105B, and bark paintings, Pl. 119A, 126A.

seashore, usually with the points of their fingers. Some of the children were particularly dexterous. Plate 91C is a sand drawing of a goanna and Pl. 91D a moulded figure of a fish. 532* 857

In Central Australia, I often saw the aboriginal children drawing simple figures on the sides of the drifting sand-hills. Barrett and Croll[2] illustrate figures of dugongs, sharks, crocodiles and even a lugger in sail, which the aborigines of the Wessel Islands had scooped in the sand. [171]

5. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND DESIGN 61

The social organization of the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land dominates every aspect of their social, ceremonial, philosophical and cultural life. 621 114

Warner[3] published a list of the clans (which we now call *mala*), the high and low totems of each clan, the language groups (*mata*) and the names of the totemic waterholes. This list is by far the most valuable information we have on the subject. Warner,[4] however, although obviously puzzled about the matter, made the mistake of grouping the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land into tribes instead of clans, failing to recognize that the clan was the most powerful unit.

Thomson,[5] when referring to the same social organization, pointed out Warner's mistake, and at the same time defined the word *malla* (my *mala*) as referring to a strong patrilineal group linked together by the same totemic ancestors. Elkin and the Berndts[6] list some of the *dua* and *jiritja* clans (*mala*) and language groups (*mata*). I also was able to obtain additional data on the subject. Nevertheless, our knowledge of the *malas* and *matas* is still very incomplete.

As my research on the art of the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land developed, however, it became evident that the effects of this social organization was as powerful in the realms of pictorial art as it is in other aspects of their culture. I found that aborigines who had totemic ancestors in common were using designs on their bark paintings and other art objects which were unlike those employed by men of different clan affiliations. Inquiries also revealed that many, perhaps all, of these designs, the property of any particular language group or *mata*, had been handed down to them by one or another of their mythical totemic ancestors.[7] 532* 61 [128]

[2] Barrett and Croll (1943), Pl. 71, facing p. 76. [3] Warner (1937), pp. 39-51.

[4] Warner (1937), p. 35, writes: 'The tribes of northeastern Arnhem Land . . . are very weak social units, and when measured by the ordinary definitions of what constitutes a tribe fail almost completely.'

[5] Thomson (1949), p. 11. [6] Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 23.

[7] For origin of designs see myths of *Nguru-gujameri* and the *gunjun* crab design, p. 290; *Banaitja* and the *jiritja* designs, p. 291; *burudji* the snake, and other *jiritja* designs, p. 309; *Djudkgao* and the light on the waves, the rising sun and the parallel lines of sand-hills, p. 273.

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177 the smoking pipe illustrated in Fig. 63B, this triangular pattern was engraved on
*532 a canoe which had been cast up on the beach near Port Bradshaw.

Figure 64P, a rubbing from a smoking pipe from southern New Guinea,[18] is almost a duplicate of the *dua djapu mala* design, Fig. 61A.

CONCLUSIONS

●171 The art of the north-east coast differs from the art of the rest of Arnhem Land in several important respects: (a) it is more complicated and colourful; (b) there
*532 are a number of alien symbols which indicate that it has been influenced by sources outside Australia, but that this influence is of comparatively recent origin; and (c) certain designs are the exclusive property of specified groups of aborigines.

(a) Whereas the basic art of Arnhem Land consists of single or multiple figures on a plain ground, that on the north-eastern coasts has a wide range of designs, skilfully and interestingly arranged within the painting area. There are few open spaces, as in the basic art, the background of almost all of the paintings being filled in with attractive arrangements of cross-hatching in red, yellow, black and white. The designs, their pleasing arrangement and the colourful textures of the cross-hatching, make the art of north-eastern Arnhem Land the most decorative that we know of in Australia. In contrast with the Oenpelli art, however, that of the north-east has no unusual designs such as X-ray and 'hocker' figures, 'joint marks', men with hook-shaped faces. Nor does it, like the *Mimi* art of Oenpelli, depict human beings in action.

The art of the north-east is essentially a static art with all the subjects at rest. The north-eastern art also has a number of abstract designs which cannot be interpreted without the aid of the artist who produced them.

177 (b) All evidence suggests that many of the elements in the decorative north-
eastern art are of recent origin. It is known that the aborigines, about two
171 generations ago, adopted the practice of carving human figures in the round
*532 from their Indonesian visitors and it is likely that they have copied, from the
same source, many of the complicated art forms, cross-hatched designs, and at
least some of the symbols used by the clan and language groups.

Pobassoo, the Macassan chief, told Flinders, when they met in the Malay Roads during 1803,[19] that twenty years previously he was the first Indonesian to visit the north-eastern coast of Arnhem Land. If Pobassoo's statement was correct, and we have no evidence as yet to the contrary, then we can assume that the aborigines of those parts had not been subject to foreign influences before that date. This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that the art of the north-eastern Arnhem Land has not spread far inland. It is confined to a limited area near the coast, even though the myths and ceremonies depicted on the bark

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[18] Collection of South Australian Museum, No. A10261.

[19] Flinders (1814), vol. 2, p. 229.

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paintings and other art objects are performed, with little variation, over most of Arnhem Land (Fig. 2). 171 ● [177]

(c) Another characteristic of the art of north-eastern Arnhem Land is that certain designs, or arrangements of designs, are the exclusive property of individual clan or language groups. Some of these, according to the myths, were first [424] produced by a mythical forbear, the ancestor of the totemic group which owns that particular design. The fact that many of these are present in the art of the Celebes suggests a link between the two areas and is worthy of more investigation.

5

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

THE DECORATED FIGURES and objects collected in Arnhem Land can be grouped in four classes: Human and animal figures, carved in wood, moulded in wax or made from bark, belonging to both north-eastern Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt; the human penis; carved and painted ceremonial objects associated with ancestral beings and totemic groups of western Arnhem Land; and decorated implements and weapons. 532* [171]

532* 171 *Human and Animal Figures.* It has been known for many years that the aborigines of Australia, and especially of Arnhem Land, produced carved representations of men and women in wood. Warner,[1] during 1926-9, saw at Milingimbi mortuary posts four to five feet long, erected over the graves of the dead, on which 'a series of incisions may be made at the top . . . to give it the appearance of a carved "head" with one or more necks.' Worms,[2] in 1942, records carved human figures used in the Goranara ceremony of the Kimberley regions of north-western Australia. In 1948,[3] and again in 1949,[4] the Berndts described wooden figures from Yirrkalla in north-eastern Arnhem Land, and in 1953 Mountford[5] records a wooden figure from the Durack Ranges of north-western Australia.* The aborigines of Yirrkalla also make human figures in bark and wax. Worms[6] illustrates similar bark figures used in the Goranara ceremony, and McConnel[7] a figure in wax from Cape York, Queensland. During the expedition's stay at Yirrkalla, I collected a number of human figures made in wood, wax and bark. [764] [237]

Animal figures carved in the round have been found over a much wider area than have the human figures. Spencer[8] illustrates a carved turtle and a fish from Oenpelli. There is also in the South Australian Museum collection a carved crocodile from Cape York, a dugong from Melville Island, fish from both Elcho and Goulburn Islands, and carved reptiles and animals from the Nullarbor Plains of South Australia. Further research will, no doubt, show a much more extensive distribution of this type of handicraft than the present evidence indicates.

The Human Penis. A number of specimens of the human penis, in stone and wood, have been collected both in central and north-western Australia and in Arnhem Land. Campbell[9] illustrates two penes carved in stone and one in wood from north-western Australia; Mountford[10] figures two stone sub-incised penes from the same area, as well as a stone circumcised penis and a ceremonial knife

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[1] Warner (1937), p. 504.
[2] Worms (1942), Pls. 1, 7.
[3] Berndts (1948), Pls. 1-2.
[4] Berndts (1949), Pls. 1-3.
[5] Mountford (1953), Pl. 1, Figs. C, D.
* Since going to press, Mountford has seen the aborigines of Melville Island carving human figures in the round.
[6] Worms (1942), Pl. 6.
[7] McConnel (1953), Pl. XVII, Fig. F.
[8] Spencer (1928), Pl. XVI.
[9] Campbell (1921), p. 145.
[10] Mountford (1938), Pl. 8, Figs. A, B, E, G, I.

[P. 414 contains no text]

*532 171 from Central Australia. Balfour[11] also figures a stone penis which is linked with the myth of the rain-man from Korporilja, near Hermannsburg, Central Australia.[12]

W. E. Harney, whilst with the expedition, found a carved wooden penis associated with a mythical man, *Borolo-borolo*, set up in the middle of a saline flat.[13]

The examples of the human penis, particularly those carved in stone, exhibit a remarkable skill in the shaping of this hard material. They constitute an ethnological problem in a continent where the working of stone has not reached a high level.

Carved and Painted Ceremonial Objects. Whilst the expedition was at Oenpelli the aborigines brought in a number of sacred objects, most of them from the Liverpool River area, belonging to mythical creatures and their increase ceremonies. Spencer[14] illustrates a number of these objects.

[441] *Decorated Implements and Weapons.* Although the shield and the boomerang (two objects which aborigines in other parts of Australia spend much time decorating) are not used in Arnhem Land, many of the paddles and spear-throwers are painted with designs which, almost without exception, refer to some myth. The aborigines also engrave designs on their long smoking pipes.

1. HUMAN FIGURES IN WOOD AND THEIR CEREMONIAL OBJECTS. YIRRKALLA

*532 177 *Human Figures carved in wood.* At Yirrkalla I collected nine full-length wooden human figures and eight heads, all of which represented either mythological or spirit people.

Origin. Inquiries about the carved human figures of north-eastern Arnhem Land proved that they are of comparatively recent origin.

[764] *Mauwulan*,[15] an aboriginal about fifty years of age, remembers, when he was a small boy, seeing an old Macassan trepanger, *Bopalindi*, show his father, *Duankin*, how to carve a human head on the top of a burial post. This post *Bopalindi* later placed as a memorial on the grave of a dead Macassan.[16] *Duankin* spent much time carving a similar post, which he took to the Macassan for criticism. *Bopalindi*, when congratulating the old man on his effort, suggested that the aborigines, like the people of his own country, should place similar posts on the graves of their dead so that they would not be forgotten so quickly.

Duankin taught his son, *Mauwulan*, the art of carving the mortuary posts,[17] he in turn passing the knowledge to others. As the aboriginal craftsmen became

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[11] Balfour (1951), p. 246.

[12] I have not personally examined this specimen but from the illustration it appears to be a natural stone, bearing a remarkable resemblance to a penis. Mountford (1939c), Pl. 8, Fig. C, illustrates a similar example.

1[illegible]. Pl. 110C; myth, p. 311. [14] Spencer (1928), Figs. 542, 543, Pl. XVI.

[115] [illegible] *Mauwulan*, one of my best informants (Pl. 4A) carved many of these wooden figures for me. [illegible] did the same for Mr and Mrs Berndt.

[illegible] Berndts (1949) describe a Macassan burial. [17] See example, Pl. 136C.

On the reverse side, B, the designs *c* and *d* symbolize the lines of light on the crest of the waves and the mark made in the wet sand by the bottom of the canoe as *Djunkgao* pulled it up on the beach at Jelangbara.

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The Lizard, Tjunda. Plate 134B is a *dua* carved figure of the lizard, *tjunda*, seen by *Djunkgao* and his sister, *Madalait*, at Jelangbara, north of Port Bradshaw.[42] The cross-hatched parallel panels on the neck and the shoulders are the parallel sand-hills 'sung' by *Djunkgao* at Jelangbara; the zigzag line, the track of the lizard; and the groups of transverse lines on either side, the loose sand running from under its feet as it walked along the crest of a sand-hill.

The Man, Banaitja, or Laitjun

While *Banaitja* was resting on the bottom of the Duluruwaltjalapa swamp, after he had been speared by the aborigines of Blue Mud Bay, he painted designs on every part of his body.[43] Later, when he rose from the water in the form of *Laitjun*, he decreed that these designs should belong to the individual *jiritja matas* (language groups) of north-eastern Arnhem Land.[44] Some of these *mata* designs are painted on the carved figure of *Laitjun*.

Plate 135A, B illustrates the carved and painted figure of *Laitjun*, the transformed *Banaitja*, whose body is covered with the *jiritja mata* designs mentioned in the myth. He is wearing feather ornaments on his beard and arms, and is carrying, in his right hand, the bark bundle[45] (later called *laitjun* or *banaitja*) with which he beat the ground to call the aborigines together. *Laitjun* is shown with a sub-incised penis.[46] Although the decorations on the head and face of the carved figure of *Laitjun* have no ceremonial meaning, those on the front, back and legs represent some, but not all, of the various *jiritja matas* (language groups) of north-eastern Arnhem Land.

a, belonging to the *dalwongu mata* of Blue Mud Bay, refers to hives of wild bees which flew from the Matamataui swamps, at Blue Mud Bay, to Milingimbi, so that they would not be destroyed by a bush-fire.[47]

b, a design similar to that of the *dalwongu*, belongs to the *manaitja mata* of Blue Mud Bay.[48] It refers to totemic honey and honeycomb in unidentified swamps at Blue Mud Bay.

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[42] Myth, p. 273.

[43] For complete myth, see p. 279.

[44] For description of language groups, *matas*, and clan groups, *malas*, see p. 106.

[45] This is similar to the *alukwira* bark bundle used in the *arawaltja* ceremonies of Groote Eylandt, Pl. 16C. Warner (1937), p. 302, calls similar bark bundles *banitja*.

[17]

[46] As mentioned previously, p. 279, this would suggest that the myth of *Banaitja* or *Laitjun* originated in an area where sub-incision was practised.

[47] Bark painting, Pl. 93B. Warner (1937), p. 15, lists wild bees, among other totems, as belonging to the *dalwongu* language group. Berndt (1948), p. 318, states that the design refers to a fresh-water weed. Later, Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 23, correct this and refer to the *dalwongu* as a *mala* associated with the *wauba* bird.

[48] Bark painting, Pl. 121D; also a painted *jiritja* skull, Pl. 101B, C. Berndt (1948), p. 318, gives as its meaning, bees and honeycomb. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 23, list *manaitja* as a *mala* (clan) group instead of a *mata* (language) group. This may be correct, for when asking the aborigines to which *mata* they belonged, they sometimes gave the name of their *mala*. Our knowledge of the *mata* and the *mala* is incomplete and confused.

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of the head, falling rain. The cross-hatched band across the forehead on Pl. 139J 773* depicts the falling rain running down the face of the *Mokoi*. 776

The Spirit Woman, Urapali

There is a spirit woman, or *Mokoi*, called *Urapali*, at Blue Mud Bay who, 776 when she took part in a burial ceremony, stabbed herself on the face and head 764 with a sharpened bone in the same manner as do aboriginal women today on 532* the death of one of their near relatives. *Urapali* still carries the marks both of the wounds and the blood which flowed from them.

Plate 140D, E illustrates the carved head of *Urapali*. On Pl. 140D the two groups of parallel lines under the eyes are tears she shed in her grief and the dots across the forehead and on the face, the self-inflicted wounds.

On Pl. 140E the white dots on the top of the head and along the side of the face indicate the places where *Urapali* wounded herself, and the meandering line along the lower jaw, the blood which flowed from those wounds.

The Spirit Man, Wulu-wulu

The spirit man, *Wulu-wulu*,[85] a *Mokoi* with a particularly dark skin, is 776 associated in some undetermined manner with the *bilumbira* serpent of Cape 532* Arnhem.

Plate 140F, G, H illustrates the carved head of *Wulu-wulu*.

On Pl. 140G the white dots on the dark face of the *Mokoi* represent falling rain. The serpent, *bilumbira*, occupies the central position on Pl. 140F. The dark crescent at *bilumbira's* head indicates cirrus clouds; the light ground behind, the cumulus cloud in which the serpent travels; and the curving parallel lines on either side, falling rain.

On the opposite side of the head, Pl. 140H, is the serpent with its head in a cirrus cloud. The dark-coloured square immediately below the cloud is the totemic place at Cape Arnhem, where *bilumbira* lives in the trees.[86] The curving parallel lines in this panel indicate falling rain.

4. HUMAN FIGURES IN BARK

The aborigines at Yirrkalla make simple human figures by binding the soft 532* bark of the paper-bark tree with string.[87] These bark figures are exhibited in some non-secret ceremonies, such as those of the *dua* spirit people (*Mokoi*).

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[85] It is possible that a fuller investigation would reveal the existence of *Wulu-wulu* men and women in a number of *jiritja* localities around Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw. See myth of *Wulu-wulu* women, p. 343, also bark painting, Pl. 109A.

[86] Myth, p. 351.

[87] Kaudern (1944), p. 300, records similar bark figures made by the natives of the Celebes to represent themselves and thus confuse the evil spirits. Worms (1942), Fig. 6, illustrates a similar bark figure associated with the Garanara ceremonies of north-western Australia. [171]

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

5. FIGURES MOULDED IN WAX

(1) Human Figures

Among the wax figures collected at Yirrkalla was one of the boomerang-man, *Oijal*, and one of his wife, *Neri-neri*. McConnel[91] records a waxen human figure used in the increase ceremonies of Cape York, and Elkin and the Berndts[92] several at Yirrkalla which, they claim, were used in imitative love magic and to cause the death of an enemy. 237 532* [171] [789]

Plate 104E is *Oijal* with boomerang-shaped designs painted on both the front and the back of the figure. Around his neck the lines of dots have the same meaning as in the bark painting, Pl. 29A, i.e. body decorations. Pl. 104F is *Neri-neri*, whose body is also decorated with lines of paint.

(2) Creatures

The aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land ~~are~~ expert in the modelling of small animal and human figures, called *kapnou korngi*, from the wax of the wild bees. This wax, much more plastic than that of the European bee, is warmed slightly over the fire and moulded into shape by the fingers. When the craftsman is satisfied with his modelling, he paints the figures with designs. These sometimes indicate the moiety and *mata* (language group) of the totemic creature. McCarthy[93] figures a kangaroo, a turtle and a crocodile from a Yirrkalla collection presented to the Australian Museum by Rev. F. W. Chaseling. [616]

Plate 143: A is the *dua* emu, *marluwai*. B is the green turtle, *gariwa*. The totemic place of this *dua* creature is on the sea floor between Yirrkalla and Bremer Island.[94] C is the *jiritja* night-bird, *karawak*, which was associated with the opossum, *marungo*, at Cape Shield.[95] D is the queen fish, *tinimbu*, belonging to the *jiritja* myths of Cape Arnhem.[96] E is the bandicoot, *warut-kura*, whose nest was destroyed by a bush-fire. The *gumaitj mata* design for fire is painted on the side of its body.[97] F is a fresh-water fish, *paipinga*, which the mythical man *Laitjun* used to catch in his fish trap at the mouth of the Koolatong River.[98] G is the dugong, *balwakmeri*. This creature is one of the main foods of the inhabitants of the *jiritja* heaven, Nalkuma.[99] H is the *dua* kangaroo, *karitjambal*. 532* 616 773*

6. CREATURES CARVED IN WOOD

The aborigines of Yirrkalla, and to a lesser extent those of Groote Eylandt, carve simple wooden figures of various creatures. The fact that in the collection of the South Australian Museum there are examples of similar wooden figures from Melville, Goulburn and Elcho Islands suggests that this craft is carried out over most, if not all, of Arnhem Land. 532* 171

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[91] McConnel (1953), Pl. XVII, Fig. F.

[92] Elkin and the Berndts (1950), Pl. 10A, p. 100.

[93] McCarthy (1938), Fig. 40.

[94] Painted coffin, Pl. 102C, D.

[95] Carved message stick, Fig. 65A, B.

[96] Bark painting, Pl. 110B.

[97] Bark painting, Pl. 116B.

[98] Engraved pipe, Fig. 60B.

[99] Bark painting, Pl. 116A.

*532 on the surface of the swamp. The four vertical panels, *c, c, c, c*, are posts used
*773 in the fish trap,[8] the dark line *a* being a larger and much stronger post than the
778 others. The curving lines at the head of the shark are the leaves and the white dots the bulbs of the spike rush, *rakia*.

Looking at the top, Pl. 132B, the rectangles and the intersecting lines still represent the palm leaves and the posts. In the black rectangle, *b* is the fish spear with which *Borolo-borolo* wounded *mana* at Cape Arnhem.[9]

The designs on the bottom of the carved figure, Pl. 132C, are a simple form of X-ray art. The meandering line within the long black diamond indicates the intestines of the fish, and the long oval toward the tail, the vent.

Miscellaneous Creatures

*532 Plate 137E is a simple wooden figure of the echidna,[10] *tjirmunna*, which was
*773 speared by the plover-man, *Tjutju* (see myth, p. 354).

Plate 137F is the carving in the round of an unidentified shark.

Plate 141C, D illustrates the obverse and reverse sides of a fresh-water tortoise.

Plate 141F and Pl. 142D are carved wooden figures of a snake-bird, or darter (*Anhinga novæ-hollandiæ*). On Pl. 142D both the wings and the curiously jointed neck are indicated.

Plate 141G is the wooden figure of the bandicoot, *warnt-kura*. During creation times some careless men, while performing a ceremony on the Gainmaui River, near Caledon Bay, started a bush-fire which burnt out the nest of the bandicoot.[11]

Plate 141J is an unidentified fish.

Plate 141K is the *jiritja* goanna, *bije*, which is associated with the yellow ochre deposit at Gurunga.

(2) GROOTE EYLANDT

●171 Plate 142A is a piece of painted bark cut into the shape of a stingray, *imadanja*. The men of Groote Eylandt make these simple bark figures as playthings for their children. The kidney-shaped design is the edible fat within the body of the stingray.

Plate 142B, C shows the obverse and reverse sides of a sheet of painted bark from Groote Eylandt which represents the green turtle, *imaraka*.

Plate 142E is a carved figure of a fish (possibly a leather-jacket). Although this is the only example of carving in the round I collected when at Groote Eylandt, its presence indicates that the Groote Eylandters practise this form of art. The aborigines of Groote Eylandt also carved simple faces, with eyes, nose and mouth, on the sacred poles of the *arawaltja* ceremony (Pl. 12A).

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[8] Bark painting, Pl. 119B.

[9] It is of interest to note that although in the myth *mana* was a man whilst at Cape Arnhem, he was wounded by *Borolo-borolo* with a multi-pronged fish-spear.

[10] Bark painting, Pl. 113B.

[11] Bark painting, Pl. 116D.

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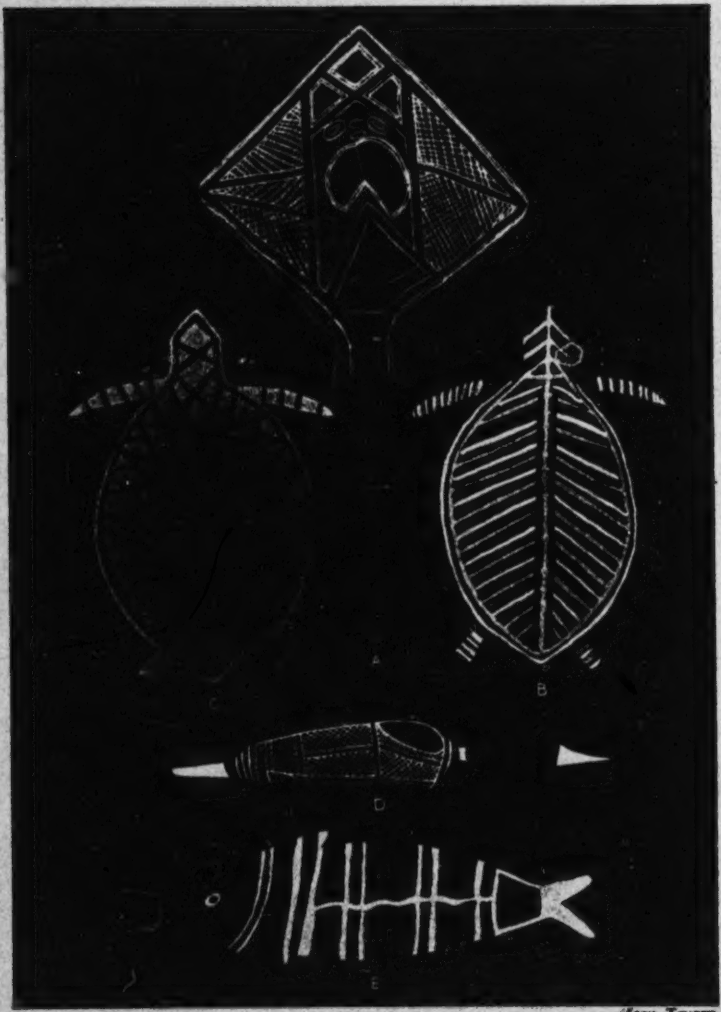

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PLATE 142. Carved and painted figures, Yirrkalla and Groote Eylandt

A Stingray B, C Turtle D Snake-bird E Fish

7. DECORATED IMPLEMENTS AND WEAPONS

*532 ●171 The aborigines of Australia gain much pleasure from the painting of their implements and weapons. The painted shields of Queensland[12] and the engraved boomerangs of northern New South Wales[13] are typical examples.

In Arnhem Land, where neither the shield nor the boomerang is used, it is the paddles and the spear-throwers which receive the attention of the artists. [517] Warner[14] records that among the aborigines of Milingimbi, 'although the paints dissolve immediately in water, the natives often paint their paddles for the mere pleasure of decorating them and seeing their beauty.' The natives of Groote Eylandt and Yirrkalla paint both their spear-throwers and their paddles. At the latter place the blades of many of the paddles are covered with engraved or painted designs of totemic significance.

(I) PADDLES FROM YIRRKALLA

The Spirit Men, Maranatuer and Bunjinkum

*773 776 Two brothers, *Maranatuer* and *Bunjinkum*, noted fishermen and hunters, once lived at Jumbara-pinja, a locality on the Pali-pali River which runs into Arnhem Bay.[15] One day the two *Mokoi* speared a particularly large *dua* turtle called *talibu* (possibly a logger-head),[16] which was so powerful that it towed them far out to sea before they were able to haul the turtle close enough to the canoe to kill it. This accomplished, they paddled back to their camp at Jumbara-pinja, disembowelled the creature and put it on the fire to cook.

Whilst they were waiting, *Maranatuer* looked toward the south and saw the [132 221] dry-season wind, *timaru*, coming toward them. They were just congratulating each other about this, for the period of the *timaru* wind is the season of maturing fruits and underground tubers, when *Bunjinkum*, looking in the opposite direction, saw *Tjambuwal*, of the wet-season wind, *bara*, approaching. Not wishing to be caught between the two winds the brothers hastily ate the turtle, embarked in their canoe and paddled to Jarkala, an island midway between Elcho and the Wessels. Then, hearing that two other *Mokoi*, *Gunbiri* and *Kaiamburo*, friends of theirs, were living on an adjacent island, the brothers left Jarkala and went to stay with them. The four *Mokoi* still live on that island, although no aborigines have ever seen them.

*532 *773 776 Plate 144C, D is the obverse and reverse sides of the paddle.

The central vertical panel on Pl. 144C is the River Pali-pali, at Arnhem Bay, along which the brothers paddled their canoe when they were setting out to catch a turtle. The cross-hatched transverse bands on either side of the river indicate the rocks and sand-banks in its bed.

In the middle of Pl. 144D is the canoe and its occupants, *Maranatuer* being at the top and *Bunjinkum* at the bottom. The dark-coloured bands in panel *a*

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[12] McConnel (1935), pp. 49-68.

[13] Davidson (1937), p. 23.

[14] Warner (1937), p. 492.

[15] Map, Fig. 57.

[136] [16] The logger-head turtle (*Caretta caretta*) is known to have reached the weight of two tons.

[text continues on p. 450 452]

*532 The body of the
*773 murdered turtle man, *Madapang*, is now a large rock on the mainland opposite
776 Bremer Island.

[778 Plate 144G, H shows the obverse and reverse sides of the paddle.

823] The upper panel on the reverse side, G, is occupied by the *dua* green turtle, *gariwa*, and the lower by a similar but larger turtle, *madapang*. The latter is the turtle who, when a man, was killed by the *Mokoi* at Melville Bay. The short transverse panels of cross-hatching near the head and tail of the turtle, *madapang*, indicate seaweed, the food of the creature, and the long panels on either side, the sea.

In the upper panel of the obverse side, H, are five dolphins, called *injipana*, and in the lower, five dolphins of a different species, called *bulanbir*. The cross-hatched panels indicate smooth sea water at the totemic place.

The panels at the head of the upper turtle indicate where the reptile dug in the sand to lay its eggs; the long panels on either side represent sea-water. The rounded end of the paddle indicates that it belongs to a man of the *dua* moiety.[20]

(2) Painted Paddles and Spear-throwers from Groote Eylandt

●171 On Pl. 145 are four paddles from Groote Eylandt, A, B, C, D and E.

No interpretations were gathered of the various designs painted on the paddles. In the upper panel of Pl. 145A is the figure of a man associated with what appears to be a wind symbol,[21] on Pl. 145D a dugong and a turtle, and on Pl. 145E another dugong. Collected by F. D. McCarthy.

On Pl. 146 are four spear-throwers from Groote Eylandt, A, B and C, D and E, and F. Although, as with the paddles, no interpretations were gathered, it is possible to distinguish a dolphin on D, and a turtle and possibly a bandicoot on E. Collected by F. M. Setzler.

(3) The Log Gongs

172 Two log gongs were collected in Arnhem Land, one (Pl. 147A, C) called
534 *uwar*, by F. M. Setzler and F. D. McCarthy, whilst engaged on archaeological research at Milingimbi, and one (Pl. 147D) called *ubara*, by myself, at Oenpelli.

Warner, when carrying out research among the aborigines of Milingimbi
796 during 1927-8, saw the log gong in use and gives a full description of its
534 function.[22] According to him, the gong, which is beaten with a frayed section of pandanus root, is used only in the *ulmark* cycle of ceremonies. When the women hear the sound of the gong, which they believe is the voice of the serpent
[789] *muit*,[23] they assemble in the camp and continuously repeat the call, *kait-bu*. This call protects the women from harm, it being the same as that used by the

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[20] For shape of a *jiritja* paddle, Fig. 58A, B.

[21] Bark painting of south-east wind, Pl. 24D.

[22] Warner (1937), pp. 315-16.

[23] Another name for *jurlungur*, the mythical serpent, who swallowed the *Wawalik* sisters, see myth, p. 278, and Warner (1937), p. 372).

[text continues on p. 456]

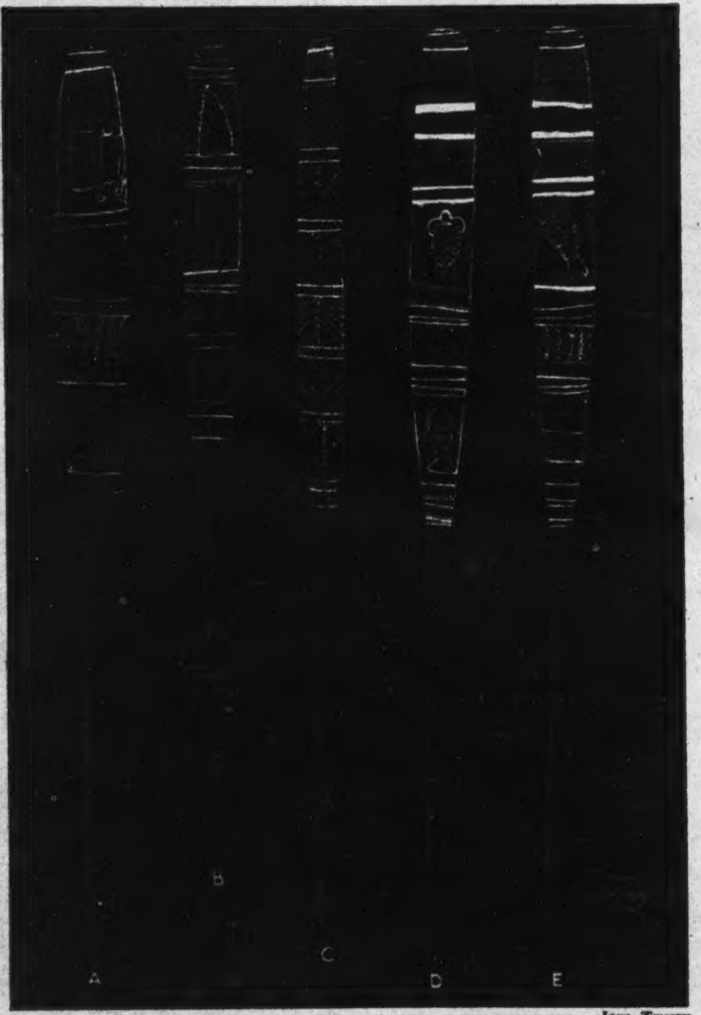

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PLATE 145. Painted paddles, Groote Eylandt

796 *Wawalik* sisters in their attempt to drive the serpent, *jurlungur*, or *muit*, back
789 into the Mirrirmina waterhole (myth, p. 279).

THE MILINGIMBI LOG GONG

*532 This incomplete myth, associated with the Milingimbi gong, *uvar* (Pl. 147A,
*773 C), and the designs painted on it, deals with a man, *Julpaipai*, his wife, *Gutjabaui*, and their daughter.

534 During creation times, *Julpaipai* and his wife travelled from Nilipidji (the famous aboriginal flint quarry, the source of the best flint knives) to the country belonging to the Liagolommira (Warner's Liaalaomir) clan on the Goyder River, where they created a sacred waterhole, Miaramina (Warner's Mirrirmina). Whilst camped beside this waterhole *Gutjabaui* gave birth to a daughter. Later *Julpaipai* sent his wife to Miaramina to collect food, and whilst there she was raped by a mythical rock python that lived in the waterhole.[24] As *Julpaipai* was making a fire to cook the food collected by his wife, he saw a dog chase a goanna up a tree used only in the women's ceremonies. Later, the goanna was followed by many spiders and a rat.

The central figure of Pl. 147A, C, is the man, *Julpaipai*, carrying a feather plume in his left hand. The lines radiating from his head indicate his hair. To the left of his head is a boomerang.[25] To the left of *Julpaipai* is his daughter, wearing a feather plume on her head and carrying another in her hand. To the left of her again is a wooden spear, resting on a boomerang. The animal near by is the rat, *marawata*, which the dog chased up the sacred tree, *warguritja*, shown immediately above. On the extreme left of the design is a digging stick belonging to *Julpaipai's* daughter.

Reading from the right of the central figure, the small beetle-like designs are the spiders, *dipala*, which followed the rat and the goanna up the tree. Near the right hand of the mythical man is his spear-thrower and two wooden spears. The figure to the extreme right is the woman, *Gutjabaui*, holding a spear-thrower in one hand a digging stick in the other. The design to the left of her head is a yam she has dug out of the ground.[26] Associated with the log is a ceremonial object, Pl. 147B, perhaps a beater, its painted designs symbolizing green ants, *tapalang*, and their nest. Myth and interpretation by F. M. Setzler and F. D. McCarthy.

THE LOG GONG, UBARA, OENPELLI

● 171 The log gong, Pl. 147D, was used in the *ubara* ceremonies witnessed during our stay at Oenpelli. According to my informants, the designs had no specific

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[24] This myth has many points of resemblance with that of the *Wawalik* sisters (Warner, 1937, p. 250). Both the clan and the sacred well have similar names, and the woman, *Gutjabaui*, gave birth to a child near the sacred well. Later the woman was raped, instead of being swallowed, by a mythical rock python which lived in the sacred well of Miaramina.

[437] [25] Although boomerangs are not made by the men of Arnhem Land, they reach Milingimbi from the south through the medium of a remarkable trade cycle. This trade cycle is described by Thomson (1949).

[26] Warner (1937), p. 313, mentions that the log gong is 'painted with snake figures, emus and other animals as well as plants'.

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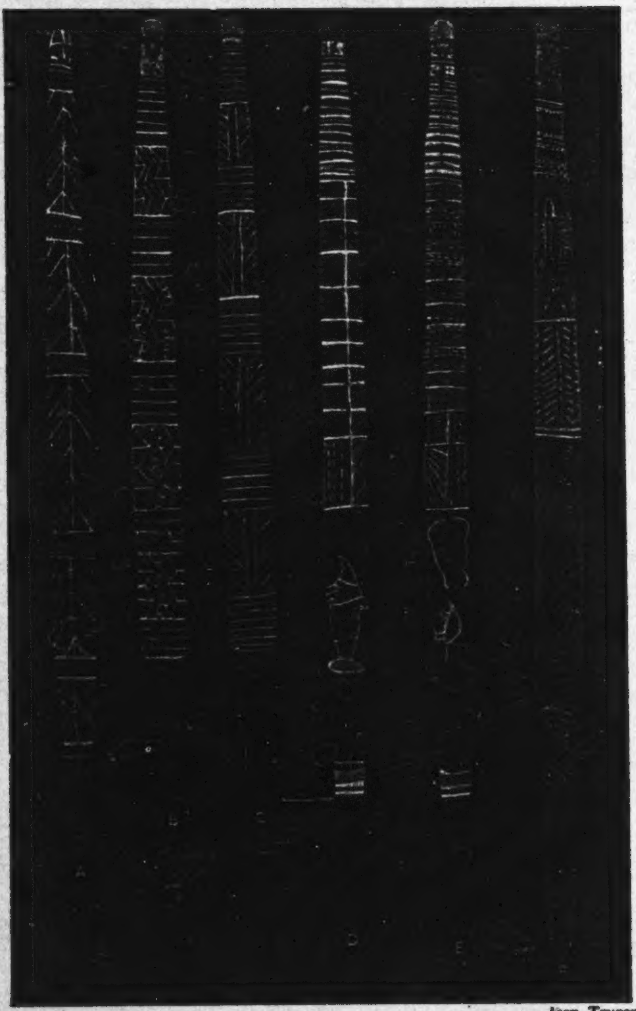

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PLATE 146. Painted spear-throwers, Groote Eylandt

● 171 meaning. There is, however, a myth which explains how the log drum, *ubara*, and the beater, *lubait*, were first made.

At one time, a mythical man cut down a hollow tree and left it lying on the ground. Next morning his dog, *Balnuknuk*, went out hunting and, seeing a bandicoot enter the hollow log, ran across and started to pull it out. As he did so the bandicoot transformed itself into a beating stick, *lubait*, a frayed stump of pandanus root, which today is used to beat the sacred log at the *ubara* ceremonies. Just as the dog (which at the same time changed itself into a man) had taken the drum stick, *lubait*, in his hand, he heard the drumming call of the emu. *Balnuknuk* listened intently, then, striking the hollow log with the drum stick, found that he could make the same sound as the emu. He was so pleased with the sound made by the hollow log that he gave it his own name (*balnuknuk* is the sacred name, *ubara* the common name).

After hiding the log gong, which today is sacred, and the beating stick, *lubait*, *Balnuknuk* visited a camp of aborigines, telling the fully initiated men about his new find and inviting them to come and see and hear it. The men, pleased with the appearance and sound of the wooden gong, asked *Balnuknuk* about his plans. *Balnuknuk* then explained that he intended to show the initiated men how to perform the *ubara* ceremony, in which the hollow log would take a central part, but only on the understanding that no women or uninitiated youths must be allowed to see the gong, or even hear its note. When all had agreed, *Balnuknuk* taught the men the songs and dances of the *ubara* ceremony[27] and then disappeared into the ground, leaving behind, for the use of future generations, his ceremony with its special songs and dances, his wooden gong, *balnuknuk*, and the beater, *lubait*. See bark painting, Pl. 61D.

I was able to see this log gong in all stages of manufacture. When the old men had agreed to perform the *ubara* ceremony, two men went to a locality where there were many hollow trees and, tapping their trunks with a stone, picked out one whose sound indicated that it would make a good gong. They felled the tree, cut out a five-foot section, removed the bark from the outside and the termite nest inside it, and putting the hollow log on their shoulders, brought it back to camp. For a considerable time, several aborigines sat around the log, beating it in different places with the frayed stump of a pandanus root until they decided the best spot to strike so that the log would give the loudest and most resonant note. Once this spot was determined, the position was marked with a rectangle of yellow (on the left of Pl. 147D). The gong was then painted with bands of colour, and covered with red, yellow and black dots.[28]

In use, the gong was either carried under the arm, as described by Warner,[29] or rested on the knees (Pl. 147E).

When Spencer visited Oenpelli he saw, and described in some detail, a ceremony which he called the Ober[30] (almost certainly the same as my *ubara*).

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[27] Mountford (1949), p. 770.

[28] Mountford (1949), p. 773.

[29] Warner (1937), p. 311.

[30] Spencer (1914), p. 133.

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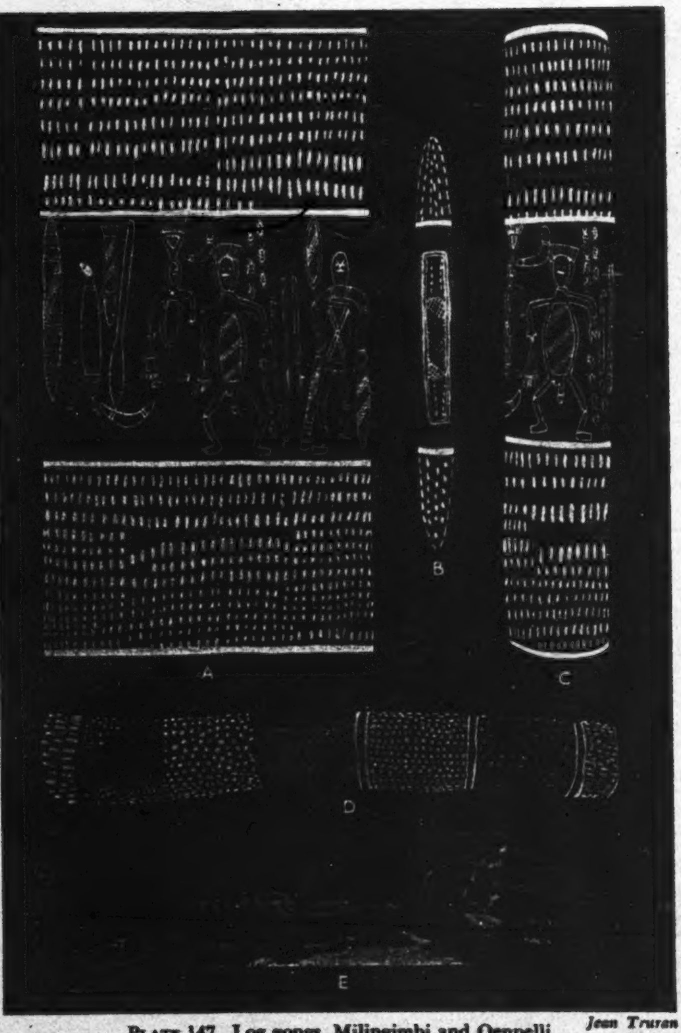

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Plate 147. Log gongs, Milingimbi and Oenpelli

A, C Log gong, Milingimbi
B Ceremonial object, Milingimbi
D Log gong, Oenpelli
E Method of holding log gong, Oenpelli

●17 In his description, however, he makes no reference to the log gong, which he could not have missed, as it takes so central a part in the present-day rituals. This indicates that the log gong, without doubt a recent importation into Australia, had not reached Oenpelli at the time of Spencer's visit. If this surmise is correct, then the myth associated with the gong[31] is also a recent introduction to explain the origin of a new cultural trait.

8. CEREMONIAL OBJECTS OF WESTERN ARNHEM LAND

Spencer gathered much information about the carved and painted objects of western Arnhem Land known under the general name of *muraian*. He figured a number of them, some being similar in appearance to those I collected.[32]

Spencer also described a *muraian* ceremony he saw in 1912,[33] during which a number of these sacred objects were displayed. The function of that ceremony was to magically increase the supply of living creatures which each *muraian* represented. Further, Spencer found that these *muraian*, or their duplicates, are inherited from father to son. He writes[34]: 'The history of every stick and stone and the names of all individuals who have possessed them in succession is perfectly well known.' These *muraian*, being particularly sacred, were either brought to my tent at night or, if in the daytime, heavily wrapped in paper-bark. They were only exhibited when the tent door was closed.

The *muraian* of western Arnhem Land might be compared—and indeed they appear to perform a similar function—to the *tjurunga* of the Aranda tribe of Central Australia. They are stored in secret caves; they are associated with, and possibly the repository of, the spirit of the respective totemic food ancestor; each carries a mythical story about its creator, some of the details of which are painted on the particular *muraian*; and they, like the *tjurunga* of the Aranda, are employed to increase the supply of the particular creature or plant.

The Jungle Birds, Caujut and Iunga-iunga

Plate 148A is associated with an unlocalized totemic place, once the camp of two mythical jungle-bird men, *Caujut* and *Iunga-iunga*. The longitudinal parallel lines at the top and bottom represent the road along which *Caujut* and *Iunga-iunga* travelled to their camp; the central design is one of the bird-men sitting within that camp.

The Man, Mandelwilpa

This *muraian*, Pl. 148C, belongs to the mythical man *Mandelwilpa*, whose totemic place is on Koepang Creek.[35] The sacred object is also associated with the *ubara* (log gong) ceremony.[36]

When the aborigines decide to perform the *ubara* ceremony the messengers, taking the *muraian* of *Mandelwilpa* with them, visit the various camps and

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[31] Myth, p. 158.

[32] Spencer (1928), Fig. 542, 543, Pl. XVI.

[33] Spencer (1928), p. 832.

[34] Spencer (1928), p. 837.

[35] Map, Fig. 10.

[36] Mountford (1949), pp. 770-3.

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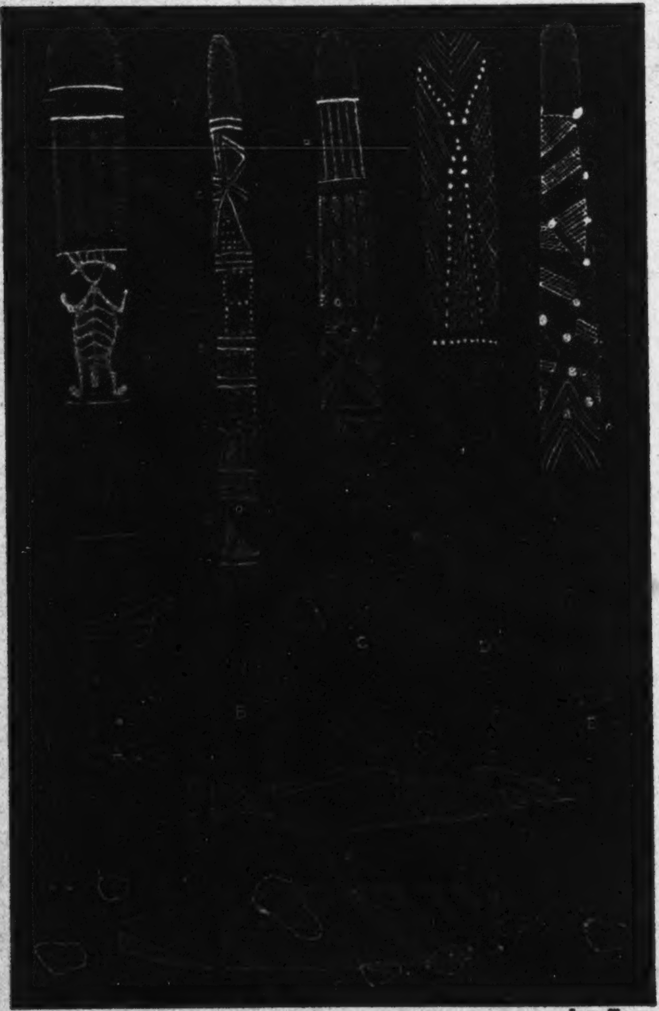

Jean Truran

PLATE 148. Ceremonial objects, western Arnhem Land

A The jungle-birds, caujat and iunga-iunga
B The diver-duck, jinia-laitja
C The man, Mandalwilja
D The snake-bird, kula-bali-bali
E The rainbow-serpent, unjau
F, G The barramundi, kimbarikara

171 arrange for the fully initiated men to assemble at a certain locality. Whilst some of the men find a hollow tree, from which to cut a section for the log drum, others erect four bush houses in the jungle, two for the *jiritja* and two for the *dua* moiety. The ceremony lasts from new moon to new moon. The first three weeks are spent in the performance of the rituals, and the last week in giving instructions about the meaning of the myths and rituals to those who have not previously taken part in the ceremony. While this is going on, the women are busily engaged gathering and preparing large quantities of food for a ceremonial meal. After the newcomers are fully instructed, the participants eat the special meal, bathe ceremonially in a nearby waterhole, and the rituals, for that year, are complete.[37]

On Pl. 148C the parallel longitudinal lines in the upper panel, *a*, and the parallel cross-hatched panels, *b*, represent the roads leading to the ceremonial house of the man *Mandelwilpa*. The lower panel with the crossed diagonal lines indicates the house. *Mandelwilpa* is the star-like design in the upper triangle of his house. The two stars at the bottom are the 'eyes' of the sacred object.

The Darter, or Snake-bird, Kulu-baii-baii

The totem place of the darter or snake-bird, *Kulu-baii-baii*, is situated not far from a large swamp called Nundjaika-djun, near the source of the Liverpool River.[38] The ancestral bird decreed that his design must be painted on the bodies of every man who takes part in his ceremonies and that no one without a beard, i.e. a youth, a child or a woman, can kill or eat a darter. If anyone did so, the spirit of the darter would make him so ill he would die.

The diagonal lines on Pl. 148D represent the tracks of the darter or snake-bird[39] as it walked from one place to another. The designs within the upper and lower triangles are the feather patterns on the bird's back, and the cross-hatching within the outer triangles, the feathers on other parts of its body.

The Rainbow-serpent, Unjaut

The rainbow-serpent, *unjaut*, lives, during the dry season, in a large swamp, Kajabet, at the source of the Liverpool River. During the monsoon season it is seen among the clouds in the form of a rainbow. Should anyone be so foolhardy as to drink the water of the Kajabet swamp, bathe in it, or even so much as visit the locality, the serpent will first kill the intruder by consuming his spirit, and then create thunderstorms so large that they will flood the land and drown the people. For that reason *unjaut*, the serpent, is greatly feared and its totemic swamp shunned by all.

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[37] This is a fragmentary account of a ceremony which almost certainly is a variant of the *dua* and *jiritja narra* rituals recorded by Warner (1937), ch. 8, and of the *amaraltja* ceremony of Groote Eylandt, p. 21.

[38] Map, Fig. 1.

[39] Called the snake-bird because of the reptilian appearance of its head and neck while fishing.

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

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This object, Pl. 148E, is the *murnian* of the rainbow-serpent, *unjaut.* The lines of dots represent marks on the skin of the serpent, and the strings with feathers attached, its 'beard'.[40] The pointed projections symbolize the jaws, and the two groups of three triangular lines at the base, called *gunma-nari-nari*, the mouth and the tongue of the serpent. The cross-hatching indicates the scales.

The Barramundi, Kimbarikara

The totemic place of the barramundi-man, *Kimbarikara*, is adjacent to the swamp, Koaba-ropera, on the upper reaches of Koepang Creek.[41]

The sacred object is somewhat the shape of a fish. On one side, Pl. 148F, is the design of the barramundi, in which the vertebrae and the internal organs are portrayed. At the head of the barramundi is the mullet, *guandara*, which, according to the myth, was eaten, during creation times, by the barramundi (*Scleropoges* sp.). The band of sloping lines, *a*, near the tail symbolizes the totemic swamp, Koaba-ropera.

On the reverse side, Pl. 148G, the design is more conventionalized. The band of diagonal lines at *f*, near the tail, again represents the totemic swamp, and the cross-shaped design, *e*, streams which run into it. The four large cross-hatched panels symbolize the hair of the barramundi-man, and the two designs, *b* and *c*, his whiskers. The triangular design, *d*, is a small swamp near Koaba-ropera.

The Diver-duck, Jinia-laitja

The *murnian* of the diver-duck ancestors are the first a young initiate is allowed to see or handle. It is his duty to carry them, heavily wrapped in paper-bark, from one group of initiated men to another.

Plate 148B is the sacred staff of the diver-duck ancestors, father and son, *Jinia-laitja*, which belongs to a totemic waterhole, Gaba-balnara, near the Liverpool River. The intersecting lines at *a* indicate the roads by which the bird-men travelled to their totemic waterhole. The four dotted rectangles at *b* are the waterholes, Gaba-balnara; the white dots indicate paper-bark trees growing along the banks. The loops, *c*, toward the bottom of the staff, refer to markings on the back of the *Jinia-laitja*. The linked circles, *d*, are the eyes of the mythical bird-men.

Plate 149C belongs to the same two ancestral diver-duck men who were associated with a watercourse, Junatnada, near the Liverpool River. The three bands, *a*, toward the top represent the camps of the father and son; the transverse band, *b*, below it, the totemic creek, Junatnada; and the curving lines, the tracks made by the mythical people.

Another sacred object, Pl. 149A, belongs to the *Jinia-laitja*, another of whose totemic places, Namarounala, is situated on the beach near the mouth of the

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[40] Most mythical serpents associated with the rainbow are highly coloured and have both mane and beard. Mountford (1948), p. 120.

[41] Map, Fig. 10.

171 Liverpool River. The white lines meeting at an angle on the top, in panel *a*, are the wings of one of the diver-duck men, the *Jinia-laitja*, and the two short longitudinal lines in panel *b*, the paths by which the father and son travelled. The white dots on panels *a* and *b* are the feather patterns on the back of the birds. The three star-like figures at *c* symbolize waterholes created by the ancestors; the two lines of white dots immediately below, the camps of the father and son. The crossed diagonal lines on panel *d* are the paths made by the two people as they walked from one camp to the other. The white dots on the lower panel, *e*, are eggs, and the star-like designs on either side of the *muraian*, the eyes of the mythical men.

The Black Diver-duck, Bon-bon

A mythical diver-duck man, *Bon-bon*, whose totemic site is at an unlocalized place, Mandikadjan, painted designs on his body so that he could attend a ceremony. After he had transformed himself into a diver-duck, *Bon-bon* decreed that no woman, child, or man without a beard should kill or eat him. If they disobeyed, he would cause them to suffer severe pains in the legs, and perhaps to die. *Bon-bon* also decreed that the designs on the performers of the *bon-bon* totemic ceremonies should be the same as those he had painted on his own body.

The main design on the bark painting, Pl. 149B, is the body of the diver-duck, *bon-bon*. The projection at the top is the beak, the two small projections on each side, the legs, and the sharp point at the bottom, the tail of the bird. The designs on the body symbolize the feather patterns.

The Mackerel, Maidba

Plate 149D, a painted *muraian*, once belonged to a mythical fish-man, *Maidba*, whose totemic place, Balabanua, is at Rolling Bay,[42] near the Liverpool River.

The upper and middle transverse dotted lines, *a* and *c*, represent the fins of the fish, and the upper crossed diagonal lines, *b*, the bones. The lower crossed lines, *d*, are the roads along which the mythical fish-man travelled. His faeces are indicated by the white dots on the black lines and the oval figure, *e*, on the bottom of the stick. The two star-like figures near by are the eyes of the fish-man, *Maidba*.

The Water-lily Man, Magau

In early times a mythical water-lily man, *Magau*, who lived at a swamp called Mundarak-batmau, on the upper reaches of the Liverpool River, painted designs on a *muraian* similar to Pl. 149E. He was so pleased with the result that he decreed that ever afterwards those designs should be painted on both the sacred objects of his totem and on the bodies of all the men who took part in his ceremonies.

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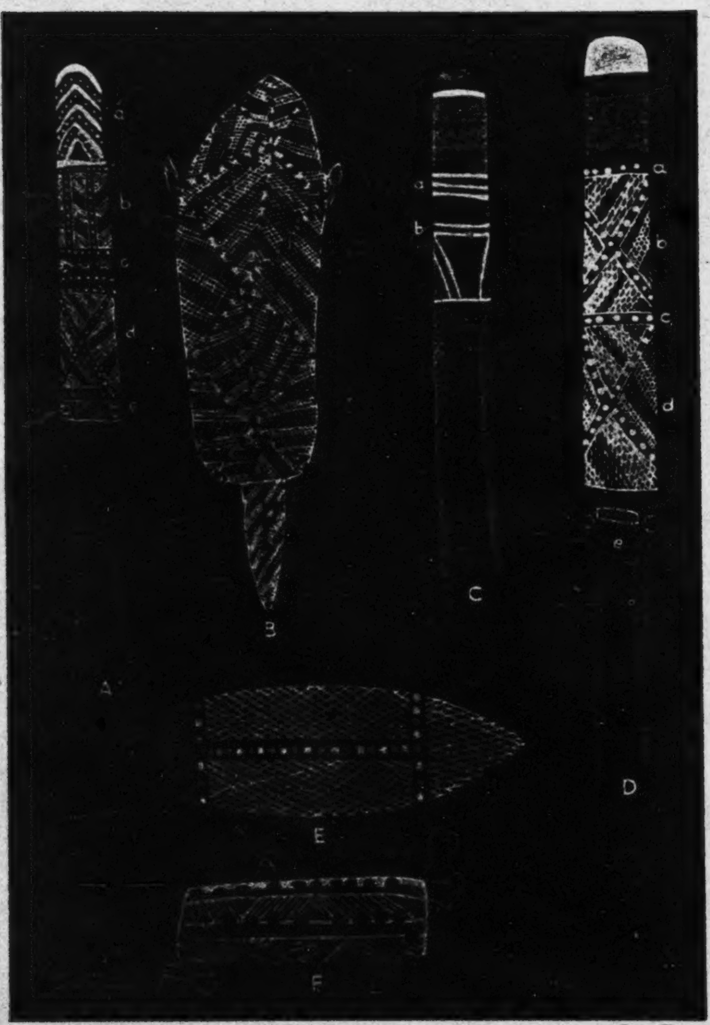
[42] Map. Fig. 1.



Jean Truran

PLATE 149. Carved and painted objects, western Arnhem Land

A, C The diver-duck, jinin-laitja B The black diver-duck man, Bon-Bon
D The mackerel-man, Maidba E The water-lily, magau F The man, Marouwil

171 Plate 149E shows the painted *murnian* of the water-lily totem. The lines of dots represent the blossoms; the parallel lines, the stalks—or their pithy centre—which the aborigines eat.

The Man, Marouwil

Plate 149F illustrates a *murnian* associated with a mythical man, *Marouwil*, whose totemic place, Anawouja, is near the Liverpool River.

The longitudinal lines represent the stomach of *Marouwil*; the dots, his faeces; and the cross-hatching, his fat.

9. MESSAGE STICKS

211 171 The scattered records of message sticks in the anthropological literature of the last seventy-five years indicate that, in one form or another, they have been, or still are being, used over most of aboriginal Australia. Spencer and Gillen,[43] however, found no evidence that sticks of the type recorded elsewhere were used by the Aranda tribe of Central Australia. Nor did I find any evidence of the use of message sticks among the aborigines of the western deserts of Central Australia, whose tribal lands are immediately west of the Aranda. Message sticks, however, are used by the aborigines of the Nullarbor Plain, which is on the southern fringe of the western deserts of Central Australia.[44] Roth,[45] in 1897, recorded fourteen message sticks from northern Queensland, and Howitt,[46] in 1904, twenty-one examples from south-eastern Australia. Both authors explained the meanings and the manner in which the sticks were used. Up to date, Roth and Howitt have made the major contributions to our knowledge of message sticks, although many other writers have referred to them.

According to both Howitt and Roth, message sticks were used for several purposes, namely, to call the participants of a ceremony together, to invite fellow-tribesmen to a hunt or a fight, and to convey a personal request from one aboriginal, through a messenger, to another, asking him for food or goods. Both Roth and Howitt, and in fact most of the other writers on the subject, are definite that the message sticks serve only as a memory aid, or perhaps a passport, the designs themselves having no recognizable meaning, nor could they be read without the aid of someone who had been told their meaning by the sender of the stick. On a number of the message sticks figured from Queensland by Roth, and from south-eastern Australia by Howitt, many of the designs referred to topographical features which the messenger would have to pass before he reached his destination. Sometimes there were notches, the length of the journey in days. Topographical details also were present on the message sticks I recorded from the southern edge of the Nullarbor Plain.[47]

211 There were, however, no such topographical details engraved on any of the examples collected at either Yirrkalla or Oenpelli. With the exception of the

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[43] 43. Spencer and Gillen (1899), p. 112.

[44] 44. Mountford (1938), p. 122.

[45] 45. Roth (1897), p. 137, Fig. 335-38.

[46] 46. Howitt (1904), pp. 691-70, Figs. 42-5.

[47] 47. Mountford (1938), p. 122.

coffin. The short lines around the skeleton are the maggots deserting the body 211
and burying themselves in the ground to pupate. The two men are now water- 532
birds; the coffins, the paper-bark wrappings of the corpse and the body of 773
Buma-buma are natural features at Wialpa.

The Night-bird, Karawak, and the Opossum, Marungo

During creation times the night-bird, *karawak*, flew from Milingimbi to a hollow tree at Cape Shield, Blue Mud Bay, so that he could talk to the opossum, *marungo*, who lived in it.[52]

At specified times, the aborigines associated with the night-bird and opossum
totems carve a stick, similar to that illustrated on Fig. 65A, B, and send it to [202]
the clan and language groups on whose territory *karawak* rested on his way to
Cape Shield. The presentation of this stick is an invitation to attend the
ceremonies at a specified time and place.[53]

Figure 65A, B represents the hollow tree at Cape Shield on the top of which, every night, the night-bird and the opossum talk to each other. The day-time camp of the opossum is represented at *e*, *e*, and the night camp at *f*, *f*.

On Fig. 65A, the opossum on the left is ascending the tree at nightfall to keep his companion company, and on the right he is descending to sleep through the hours of daylight. The designs at *a*, *b*, *c* and *d* symbolize water-lilies which grow in the swamps near the totemic tree, and the short lines at the bottom of Fig. 65B, the scratches made by the opossum in the bark of the totemic tree as he climbs up and down.[54]

(2) OENPELLI

Figure 67B is a message stick an aboriginal, *Miljirina*, at Oenpelli asked me 171
to deliver to his friend, *Jakinuramilja*, in Darwin.

The line *a* is *Miljirina*, the sender of the stick, and the line *b* the recipient, *Jakinuramilja*; *c* is *Tundara*, one of *Miljirina's* wives, and *d*, another wife, called *Marinja*. The lines *e* and *f* each represent a bottle of tobacco. *Miljirina* wanted his friend, *Jakinuramilja*, to induce his two wives, *Tundara* and *Marinja*, to come back to him at Oenpelli; he also wanted two bottles of tobacco.[55]

Figure 68E is the message stick I carried from an aboriginal, *Kainarani*, at Oenpelli to his son, *Pultadi*, in Darwin. The sender was distressed because his son had been drinking heavily, and was urging him to return to his father and

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[52] For the complete myth, see p. 362.

[53] Warner (1937), p. 362, mentions that at Milingimbi similar *garrawak* message sticks are carried to both *dua* and *jiritja* groups notifying them that the *narra* rituals are about to start.

[54] The symbolism employed on the bark painting of the night-bird and the opossum, Pl. 115E, is similar to that used on the message stick.

[55] Tobacco was traded in small bottles. When we were at Yirrkalla the mission authorities [439
at southern Groote Eylandt discontinued the issue of tobacco. After that prohibition, there was [797]
a regular trade in bottles of tobacco between the expedition camp and the Groote Eylandt 279]
Mission. The tobacco followed the same lines as in the ceremonial trade cycle described by
Thomson (1949).

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*592

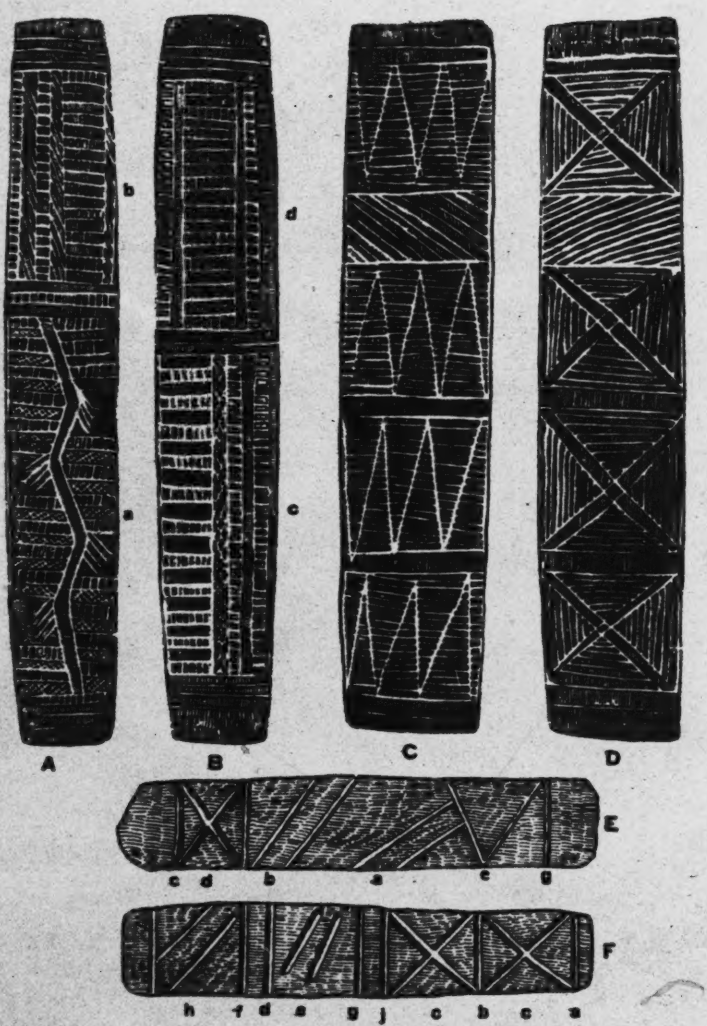
b
a
d
c
A
B
C
D
E
c d b a e g
F
h f d e g j c b c a

FIG. 68. Message sticks, Yirrkalla and Oenpelli *Jean Truran*

A, B Ceremonial, Djunkgao C, D Unidentified E Kainaraui F Miljirina mother. The two marks, *a*, referred to the somewhat tragic message I was asked 171 to deliver, and the two marks, *b*, to the sorrowing mother and father. The son was also asked to send, or bring, other supplies, *c* being a request for tobacco, the crossed diagonal lines, *d*, for two blankets, the triangle *e* for sugar, and g for a mosquito net.

Figure 60F is a message stick I carried from *Miljirina* at Oenpelli to a number of aborigines at Darwin, chief among them being *Tjakulima*. Line *a* is a request from *Miljirina* to *Tjakulima* to send out food because he wished to go to Goulburn Island; *b* is a member of the staff of Native Affairs in Darwin, and *c*, *c* (the crosses) requests to that officer to send *Miljirina*'s wife, *Tundum*, back to Oenpelli; *d* is *Wiung*, *e* two sticks of tobacco, *f* an aboriginal, *Nantjin*, g another aboriginal, *Minum*, and *h*, more sticks of tobacco which *Miljirina* wanted the men to send to him at Oenpelli.

6

ASTRONOMY

THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES, whose knowledge of the night sky is far greater than that of most white men, have surrounded the heavenly bodies with a maze of stories. 821 114

Although the writers of the last century, Smyth,[1] Squires,[2] Ridley[3] and others, gathered much information about aboriginal astronomy, few later writers have done so. Maegraith[4] has published a detailed and valuable description of the astronomy of the Aranda and Luritja tribes of Central Australia; Mountford[5] has recorded a myth of Orion and the Pleiades from the Adnjamatana tribe of South Australia, and later,[6] more detailed information on the astronomy of the Pitjendadjara tribe of western Central Australia.

In Arnhem Land the aboriginal men appeared to have an extensive knowledge of the major stars, the planets and some of the inconspicuous star groups.[7] They have depicted, on sheets of bark, many of the myths relating to these heavenly bodies. Although there are some resemblances between the myths of Milingimbi and Yirrkalla, those of Oenpelli, Groote Eylandt and Yirrkalla show wide differences. [171]

1. GROOTE EYLANDT

The Constellation of the Crab, Uwala

The aboriginal constellation of the crab, *Uwala*, an unmarried sky-man living by himself, is a group of small stars at the head of Hydra. This constellation is an example of how small, inconspicuous star groups form part of the aboriginal astronomy, while adjacent first and second magnitude stars, like Procyon and Regulus, are apparently disregarded. 171

Plate 120A is the painting of the mud crab, *Uwala*. It is, in fact, almost a duplicate of the design on Pl. 9B, which deals with the ancestral crabs at Bickerton Island.

The Milky Way

The Groote Eylandt aborigines look upon the Milky Way, *atuluma*, as a sky river in whose waters are many large fish and a multitude of water-lily bulbs. It is from this river that the star-people gather their food. All the stars in the section of the Milky Way west of a line drawn between the Southern Cross and

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[1] Smyth (1878), pp. 431-4.
[2] Squires (n.d.), pp. 11-61.
[3] Ridley (1875), pp. 141-2.
[4] Maegraith (1932), pp. 19-26.
[5] Mountford (1939), pp. 103-4.
[6] Mountford (1940), pp. 151-7.
[7] Maegraith (1932), p. 20, noticed the same characteristics among the aborigines of Central Australia.

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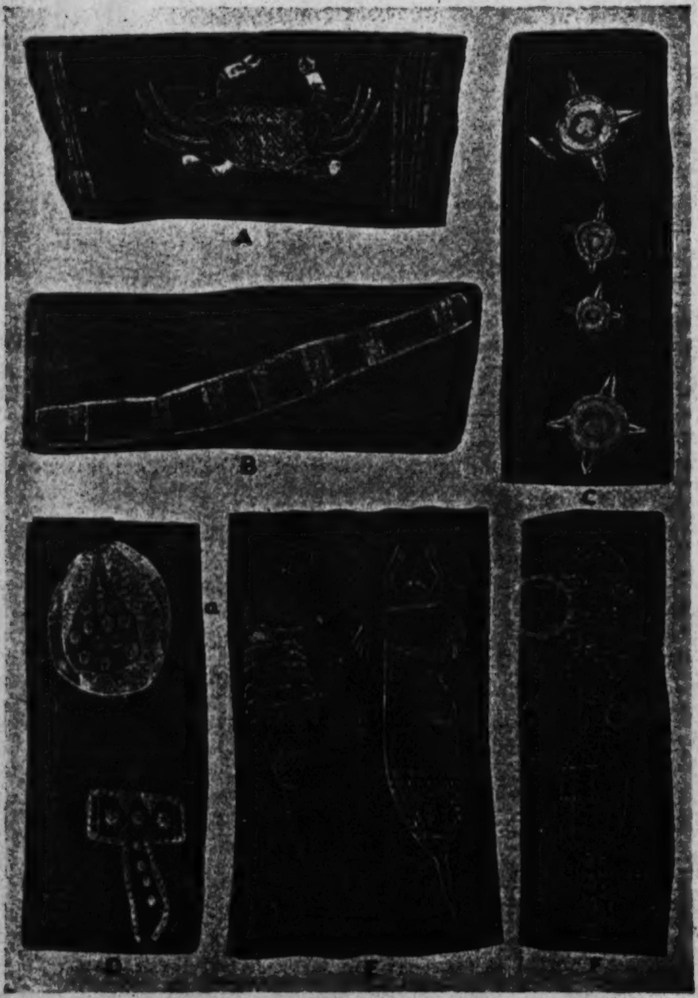

Plate 150. Bark paintings, astronomical, Groote Eylandt

A The Crab B The Milky Way C Venus, Jupiter and their children
D Orion and the Pleiades E The Scorpions F The Sun-woman

the Great Bear, Ursa Major, belong to the *wirinikapara* moiety[8] and those to the east to the *oranikapara* moiety. This observation was made at Groote Eylandt on 15 May 1948.

Plate 150B is a simple painting of the Milky Way. The transverse chevron patterns indicate breaks in the galaxy, and the dots, the myriads of stars that make up this heavenly spectacle. The aborigines believe the small stars of the Milky Way are the water-lily bulbs.

Venus and Jupiter, with Their Two Children

Venus, *Barnimbida*,[9] the man, and Jupiter, *Duwarawara*, the woman, have two children, *Dugina-nutjana*, who are stars in the 'sting' of Scorpio, Lambda and Upsilon. The two children, *Dugina-nutjana*, are considered to be 'friends' of the south-east wind, *mamariga*, for when these two stars of Scorpio appear in the evening sky toward the end of April the *mamariga* is blowing at its full strength. The children are not associated with the other prevailing winds, the north-west, *bara*, or the north-east, *timbura*.

Plate 150C is a simple painting of the star family of *Barnimbida*. The star on the top is the man, *Barnimbida*, and that on the bottom the woman, *Duwarawara*. The two stars in between are the children, *Dugina-nutjana*.

The Scorpions, Miaipra-pria

The constellation of the scorpions, *Miaipra-pria*, is made up of a number of small stars of the northern sky in the constellation of the Lynx. The *Miaipra-pria* are old childless star-people, who hunt over the sky or fish in the Milky Way for food, bringing it back to cook over their own fires, the two large stars in the constellation.

In Pl. 150E the figure on the right is the man, and that on the left, the woman. The two circles between them are the fires (unidentified bright stars) at which they cook their food.

The Sun-woman, Mamoura

The sun, being a woman, occupies a minor place in the myths of the Australian aborigines. *Mamoura*, the sun-woman, and *Wanum-gurupa*, her husband, both of whom were old and feeble, once lived at Mamoura-madja (sun-place), in south-eastern Groote Eylandt. When these ancestral people died, their bodies were transformed into two low rocks on the seashore.

Several points suggest that the sun-woman, *Mamoura*, and the female turtle, *Imoraka*, are identical. The totemic rocks of the sun-man and sun-woman at Mamoura-madja are also the ancestral bodies of the male and female green

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[8] It is interesting to note that even the heavenly bodies are grouped according to the moiety laws.

[9] Warner (1937), p. 524, who calls the evening star *barnumbir*, relates a myth about this star and the *dua* aborigines' 'heaven'. Most likely the Groote Eylandt *barnimbida* is associated with the same myth. See also Milingimbi and Yirrkalla myths relating to *barnumbir*, p. 327, p. 328.

●[7] turtles, *Imoraka*, p. 77. Both the song associated with the sun-woman and that belonging to the turtle (p. 79) deal with the activities of the turtle, the first describing the turtle entering and leaving the water, the second, the female turtle coming on shore and laying her eggs in the sand. The sun is looked upon as a female turtle.

My informants stated that the following song belonged to the sun-woman, *Mamoura*. Nevertheless, it describes the turtle leaving and entering the water. On account of the close association between the sun and the turtle it is possible that the song also refers to the rising and setting of the sun over the sea.

THE SONG

Imoraka	turtle
ibirika	goes along
nitaninda	shore
nabu-tjuna	goes under water
nanbi-tjuna	comes out of water
manbi-rinka	re-enters water

In Pl. 150F the upper turtle-like figure is the elderly sun-woman, *Mamoura*, and the lower one, her husband, *Wanum-gurupa*. The rectangles in the design were described as the 'roads' by which the sun enters the water.

The Constellation of Orion and the Pleiades

Orion and the Pleiades are linked in the astronomical myths. More often than not, Orion is a man or group of men, and the Pleiades their wives. This is the belief of the aborigines of Groote Eylandt. The major stars in the constellation of Orion are three fishermen, the *Burum-burum-runja*, and the Pleiades, their wives, the *Wutarinja*. Three of the bark paintings illustrate this myth.

In Pl. 151E the fishermen, *Burum-burum-runja*, are the three stars (Orion's belt) in the rectangle, and the smaller dots, their children. The extension (Orion's sword) in the lower left-hand corner symbolizes the line of fish the celestial fishermen caught in the creek, *ataluma* (Milky Way). The dots within the circle on the lower right are the wives, *Wutarinja* (the Pleiades).

The myth of the three fishermen, *Burum-burum-runja*, is shown differently in Pl. 151A. Here the fishermen are the three large circles with projections on their periphery. Each man has caught two fish. These are hanging from the lower edge of the bottom circle. As in the other bark paintings of Orion, the three stars representing the men are the belt of Orion, and the fish, the three stars of the sword of Orion. To the right of the constellation is the fire, *tatalu-naitjuna*, at which the men cook the fish. The circular design to the right is the fire (Bellatrix), the short, more or less straight lines, *a*, leading towards the lower right-hand edge, the flames of the fire and the longer curving lines, *b*, the smoke. The flames and the smoke are nearby parts of the Milky Way. The wives of the men, i.e. the Pleiades, are not shown in this painting.

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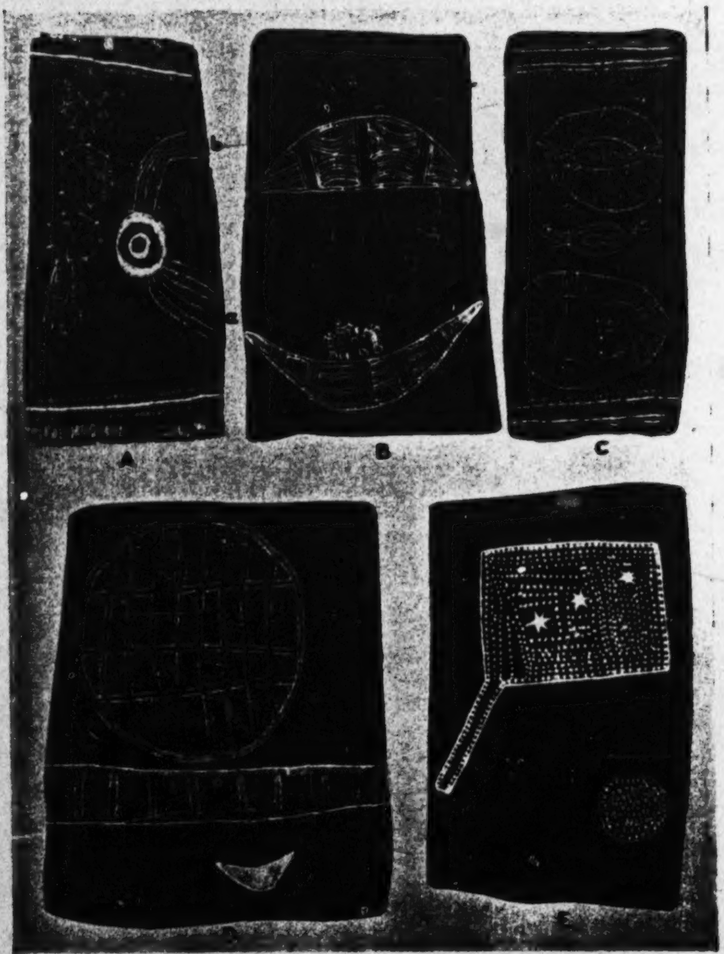

PLATE 151. Bark paintings, astronomical, Groote Eylandt

A, E Orion and the Pleiades B, D The Moon-man C The Magellan Clouds

B

●171

Plate 150D depicts the three fishermen, *Burum-burum-runja*, and their wives, *Walarinja*, in another form. The three stars (Orion's belt) in the upper part of the T-shaped design are the fishermen. The first upper star in the vertical limb of the T (the sword of Orion) is the fire at which the men cook their fish. The second and fourth stars are parrot-fish and the third a skate. Above, at *a*, are the wives of the celestial fishermen seated within their circular grass hut.[19]

The Moon, Jumauria

In the early days of the world the moon, *Jumauria*, had no wife, and so was lonely. As he was travelling across the sky one night he heard a pounding noise and looking down saw the woman, *Dunani-admina*, seated with her family by their camp-fire, preparing food for the evening meal. Quickly *Jumauria* came to earth and, capturing the woman and her family, took them with him into the moon. They have remained there ever since and can be seen on the face of the moon any clear night, the mother, her three children and the moon trees, *tjamba*, under which they shelter.

The aborigines have established a relationship between the tides and the moon. They believe that when the tides are high, the water runs into the moon and fills it up. Then the moon becomes fat and round. When the tides are low the water runs out of the moon, leaving it thin and small. When I asked my informants why, although the tides were high at the new moon, the moon itself was still thin they explained that this was not so. Although only a small part of the moon was shining (like pearl shell), the dark body of the moon could be seen, made fat by the water which flowed into it from the high tide.

Plate 151B pictures *Jumauria*, the moon-man, with his wife and family. The upper design is the full moon, although only half the disc is shown. The lower is the new moon with *Dunani-admina*, the moon-man's wife, and her two children standing on its upper edge. The moon trees, *tjamba*, are not shown.

In Pl. 151D is the circular disc of the moon with a series of lines on the lower edge indicating the water running into the moon from the sea, the transverse band across the bark sheet. The new moon is shown on the lower edge as a crescent.

The Magellan Clouds

The Magellan Clouds are the camps of an old man and woman, known as the *Jukara*, who are so feeble that they cannot gather their own food. The other star-people spear the fish in the waters of the sky river, *ataluma*, gather the water-lily bulbs from its shallow reaches and take them to the *Jukara*, who cook the food at their own fire.

The lower design in Pl. 151C, the greater Magellan Cloud, is the camp of the old man, *Jukara*. The upper design, the lesser Cloud, is the camp of the woman. The oval between the camps is the fire at which the *Jukara* cook their food. This is a star called *Angnura*, probably Achernar. The details of the fire are of some interest. The central oval is the fire and the lines to the right, the burning logs. The outer oval with the curving lines right and left, which my informants said was a circle of small stars, is the smoke of the camp-fire.

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[19] Reproduced in *Australia: Aboriginal Paintings—Arnhem Land*, 1954. Pl. XXX.

The Southern Cross, the Pointers and the Coal Sack

The Southern Cross, the Pointers and the Coal Sack form an aboriginal constellation. The Coal Sack was once a large fish, *alakitja*, which, while swimming in the waters of the celestial stream, the Milky Way, was speared by the two brothers, *Wanamoumitja* (Alpha and Beta Crucis), and dragged to the bank. The brothers divided the fish and cooked it, each at his own fire. Those fires are the remaining two stars of the Southern Cross, Delta and Gamma Crucis.

Near the brothers are two of their friends, the *Meirindilja*, who, at the time the fish was captured, had just returned from a hunt. The *Meirindilja* are sitting at their own camp-fire, chanting a song and beating their boomerangs together to mark the time. These men are the Pointers, Alpha and Beta Centauri.

Plate 152E shows the two brothers, the *Wanamoumitja*, spearing the fish, *alakitja*. The fires at which the fish was cooked are two white discs near the tail. This painting represents the four stars of the Cross and the Coal Sack.

Plate 152B pictures the two men, *Meirindilja*. The two groups of three boomerangs, one group on either side of the *Meirindilja*, were made by them before they went hunting. The transverse lines on the chests of the men are body scars and those across their hips the belt from which hangs their pubic tassel.

In Pl. 152C the whole constellation is painted diagrammatically. On the left-hand side the men, *Meirindilja*, indicated as stars, are shown with their boomerangs between them. The discs in the middle of the painting are the two cooking fires. On the right is the fish, *alakitja*, with the stars above and below representing the brothers *Wanamoumitja*.

W. E. Harney, who collected the terrestrial story of the rock cod and the men of the Southern Cross some years previous to our visit, has provided me with the following particulars.

A rock cod once lived under a projecting boulder in a lagoon some miles south of Windana (Cape Barrow), Fig. 4. Two brothers who lived in the country often reached down when they were passing to feel how large the fish had grown, planning one day to kill and eat it.

There came a time, however, when the rock cod, which by then had grown into a very large fish, on feeling the hands of the men, caught hold of them, pulled the men under the water, drowned and swallowed them. Then, moving from the lagoon to the sea, thereby creating the Minnie Creek, the fish swam southward until it reached Weakaba, which is at the mouth of the present-day Roper River. After a short stay at Weakaba, the rock cod travelled in a westerly direction, creating the lower reaches of the Roper River on the way, until he met two rainbow-serpents who had just completed the upper part. The work

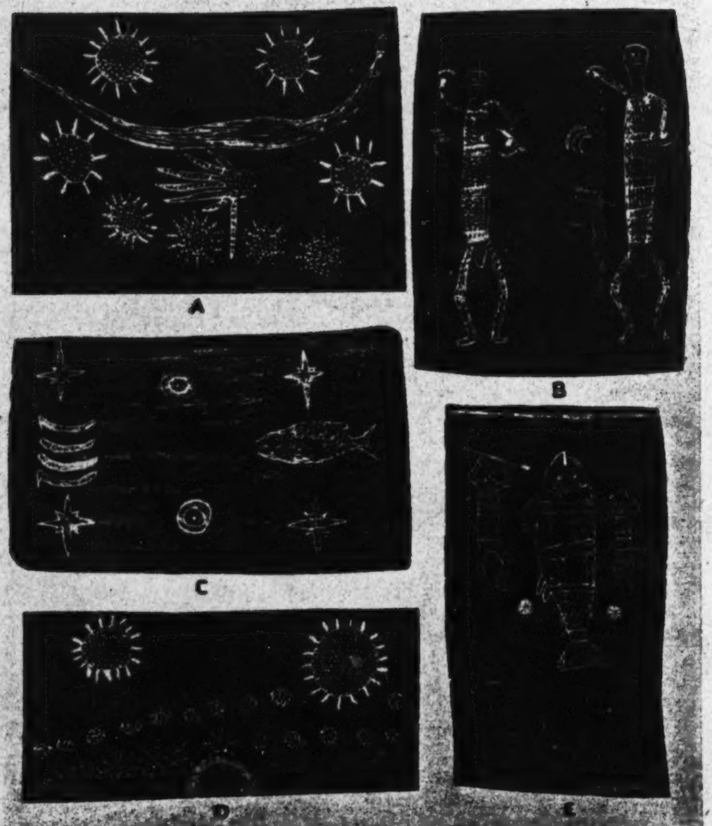

Plate 152. Bark paintings, astronomical, Groote Eylandt and Oenpelli
A The Southern Cross, Oenpelli B The Pointers
C, E The Southern Cross, Groote Eylandt D Stars

of the cod being finished, he lived quietly in the river until two brothers of the dead men, called the *Wanamoumitja*, speared the rock cod and he died.

The body of the fish was transformed into a large boulder on the banks of the river, but his spirit went into the sky, swam along the Milky Way and came to rest at a place in the firmament known to the white men as the Coal Sack. The two brothers, *Wanamoumitja*, who killed the fish are now large stars near by.

2. OENPELLI

The Milky Way, Mungabou, and the Coal Sack, Munguiban

According to the aborigines of Oenpelli the Milky Way is a stream, *mungabou*, which flows across the sky. No fish live in its waters, or birds float on its surface. There is, however, a multitude of water-lily bulbs, the small stars, which are food for the sky-dwellers. The Coal Sack, *munguiban*, is looked upon as a large plum tree which, during the early 'rain-time', about late December, provides the celestial inhabitants with much fruit. These sky-dwellers are friendly people and often visit each other.

In Pl. 153B the diagonal line is the 'creek' of the sky, *mungabou*, and the adjacent stars, the sky-dwellers who live along its bank. In the upper right-hand corner is the great tree, *munguiban*, the Coal Sack.

The Morning Stars, Garakma

These unidentified morning stars are a celestial family, known as the *Garakma*, which can be seen in the morning sky during October. Like many other sky-dwellers, they live on the water-lily bulbs which grow in the water-course of the sky, *mungabou*, the Milky Way, and fruit from the tree *munguiban*, the Coal Sack.

On Pl. 152D the large star on the right is the man, *Garakma*, and the one on the left, his wife. The circles with enclosed dots are the girls, and the star designs on the lower left, the boys of the family. The children are called the *gingin*.

The Southern Cross

In the early days of the world a group of star-men, the *Nangurgal*, accompanied by their sons, went hunting and caught a large non-venomous snake. This they cooked and ate. After the *Nangurgal* had finished their meal their eyes became so bright that even people on earth could see them. They are now the stars of the Southern Cross.

In Pl. 152A the eyes of the *Nangurgal*, the Southern Cross, are the four larger stars, and those of their sons, the smaller stars. The crescent, once the snake, is the Coal Sack. Immediately below the crescent is the fire, *gunark*, an unidentified star, on which the *Nangurgal* cooked the snake. The projections are the logs on the fire.

The Walagugu and the Tjirupun

•171 The Southern Cross, the Pointers and a number of adjacent small stars within that part of the Milky Way make up the aboriginal constellation of *Tjirupun*[11] and the *Walagugu*, with the respective families. *Tjirupun* lives with his numerous wives and children in a round grass hut, and the *Walagugu* camp in the open. These star-people live exclusively on the water-lily bulbs they collect in the nearby Milky Way.

The man, *Tjirupun*, is the large white circle in the centre of Pl. 155C, the remainder of the circles being his family, the larger his wives and the smaller his children. The four outer stars are the *Walagugu*, *a*, *a*, being the men and *b*, *b*, their wives. The parallel lines joining these stars to the main design are tracks made by the *Walagugu* as they travelled to and from the Milky Way in search of food.

None of the individual stars in this painting was specifically identified, but it seems likely that the *Walagugu* are the four stars of the Southern Cross and *Tjirupun* and his family the many stars in the nearby Milky Way.

3. MILINGIMBI

The Moon-man, Alinda

*773
821 At the time of creation the moon-man, *Alinda*, who lived at Tutula at the mouth of the Liverpool River,[12] had two wives, each of whom had borne him a son. One day when the wives were out gathering food, *Alinda* sent the boys to catch some fish while he stayed in camp to complete a large carrying-bag he was making.

The youths did not catch any fish but, on a nearby lagoon, speared a whistling duck which, instead of taking back to their father as they should have done, they cooked and ate on the spot. On their return they told their father they had not caught any fish, but said nothing about the duck they had eaten. However, the moon-man was a shrewd old fellow and knew from the grease on the boys' hands that they had recently eaten flesh of some sort, so he said:

'If you haven't caught any food, how did you get that grease on your fingers?'

Although the lads denied having eaten anything, they could not explain their dirty hands.

After *Alinda* had berated them for both their greed and deceitfulness, the boys lay down in their camp and went to sleep. *Alinda*, seeing this and still angry over the behaviour of his sons, lifted them carefully and pushed them into his carrying-bag. Finding themselves imprisoned, the lads first screamed and kicked frantically, then confessed their misdeeds, promising that, if only their

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[11] This name is similar to that used by the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land for the constellation of Orion, p. 498.

[12] Map, Fig. 1.

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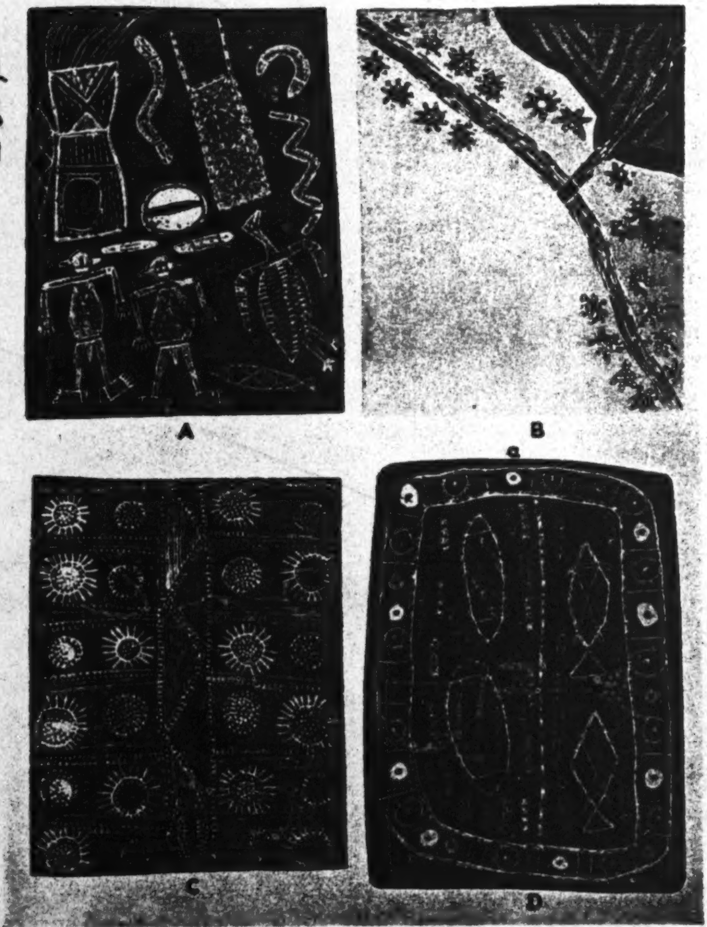

PLATE 153. Bark paintings, astronomical, Yirrkalla and Oenpelli
A The Moon-man B The Milky Way and Coal Sack, Oenpelli
C The Milky Way, Milingimbi D The opossum-man, Kapali

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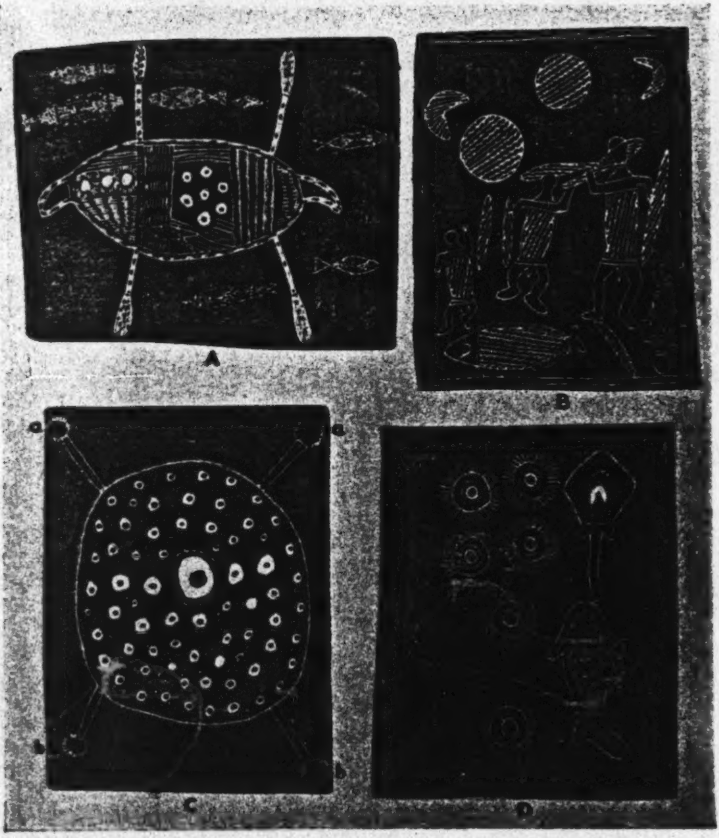

Plate 155. Bark paintings, astronomical, Yirrkalla and Oenpelli

A Orion and the Pleiades B The Moon-man
C Walagugu and the Tjirupun D The Southern Cross and the Pointers

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Warner[14] has a variant of this myth, in which it is the parrot-fish who decides that, when he dies, he will remain dead. The aborigines contend that the parrot-fish was a 'silly fool'.

Plate 155B illustrates the legend of the moon-man, *Alinda*, and the parrot-fish man, *Divina*. In the centre are the two opponents belabouring each other with clubs; on the lower left is the dead parrot-fish with his weapon lying beside him, and on the lower right, the dead moon. The parrot-fish is depicted on the lower left, and the moon, in its various phases, near the upper edge.

The Moon, Nalimba

The aborigines believe that in the early days of the world the moon, *Nalimba*, was a man who spent much of his time collecting a yam-like plant, *waralki*. His sister, a dugong-woman, *Balwokman*, who lived in and around the swamps near by, collected *rakia*, the spike-rush, for food. One day the dugong-woman was searching for *rakia* when she inadvertently walked through some itch weed which, once her skin became dry, set up an intense irritation. She tried many remedies, but without success, until in sheer desperation she dived into the sea. Finding that water stopped the itching, she said to the moon-man:

'I'm going to change myself into a dugong, and stay in the sea forever.'

'If you do,' said the moon, 'I'll live always in the sky.'

So, true to his word, *Nalimba* left the earth, taking the yams, *waralki*, with him.

One day, as the dugong was sleeping on the surface of the water, two pandanus-tree men, *Gurun-gurun*, decided to kill her for food. But just as they were about to do so a large wave breaking on the beach frightened the dugong away. The *Gurun-gurun*, in disgust, transformed themselves into pandanus trees.

Since then the moon has lived in the sky, the dugong in the ocean, and the pandanus tree on the edge of the sea and the watercourses.

At the same time, associated in some way not ascertained with the moon and the dugong, there was a man, *Guripun*, who with his young wife was collecting *rakia*. They were tying it up in bundles when the string broke, scattering the *rakia* everywhere. That *rakia* now grows in many of the swamps of Arnhem Land. Disgusted by their misfortune, the couple went into the sky and became the stars Arcturus (Alpha Bootes) and Saak (Eta Bootes). When the star Arcturus appears in the eastern sky the aborigines know that the *rakia* is mature and ready to collect.

Connected with the myth of the moon, *Nalimba*, is a belief, similar to that held by the Groote Eylandters,[15] of an association between the moon and the tides. When the moon is new or full, and sets respectively at sunset or sunrise, [171] [823]

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[14] Warner (1937), p. 523. There are several other myths of Arnhem Land that explain the origin of death: the moon-man, *Alinda*, p. 493; the native-cat, *Bunurunna*, p. 357; and the myth recorded by Berndt (1948a), pp. 16-30, which bears some resemblance to that of *Nalimba*, the moon-man, p. 495. In the Berndt version, belonging to the *jiritja* moiety, however, it is the dugong which brings death to the world. [114]

[15] See Groote Eylandt myth, p. 161.

The Sun-woman, Walo

*532 *773 821 The sun-woman, *Walo*,[22] lives at Turinjina, a place far away beyond the eastern horizon. She has one daughter, *Bara-bararinja*, whose father is the mythical man *Djunkgao* (p. 270).

When the sun-woman[23] starts on her daily journey across the sky, her daughter wants to accompany her, but the mother always refuses her, because the heat of two suns in the sky would be so great that it would scorch the hair of the aborigines and might even set the country on fire. So, every morning, according to the Yirrkalla aborigines, *Walo* rises out of the sea over Cape Arnhem and with a ceremonial digging stick in each hand (similar to those used by her husband, *Djunkgao*, and his sister, *Madalait*, Pl. 134C, D) walks across the sky until she reaches Biminura, which is far away to the west.[24] As soon as *Walo* disappears beneath the western horizon she changes herself into a wallaby and, entering a long underground tunnel, hops quickly back to Turinjina so that she will be in time to start on her journey next morning. When the sun-woman sets or rises, the intense heat of her body causes the horizon and the clouds to become incandescent.

In the right-hand panel of Pl. 156F the sun-woman is rising from her camp at Turinjina, and in the left she is setting at Biminura.

The radiating lines in both panels represent the rays of the sun breaking through the clouds at sunrise or sunset, and the transverse and vertical lines, *a, a, a, a*, the light reflected from the crests of the waves as they break on the shore.[25] The two bars across the sun indicate the red feathered string ornaments given to her by *Djunkgao*, which she always wears round her waist and forehead when she is in the sky.

CONCLUSIONS

*773 821 ●171 Although the bark paintings and the related myths of the astronomy of the aborigines of Arnhem Land give us but a glimpse of the rich star lore of those people, their analysis has revealed several points of interest: the importance of the moon and the relative unimportance of the sun; the similarity of the beliefs surrounding the Milky Way, the constellations of Orion and the Pleiades, and the Magellan Clouds; the wide variation in the myths concerning the Southern

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[22] Berndt (1952), p. 86, states that the place of *Djanggawul* (*Djunkgao*) is the sun's place. He also records that the sun-woman had two daughters, *Barinanga* (almost certainly my *Bara-bararinja*), who used to accompany her across the sky. But she finally sent them back, because the heat from three suns was too great for the aborigines. Waterman (1953), in a personal communication, stated that some of the Yirrkalla aborigines believe there are two suns in the sky at the same time, a man and his wife.

[23] Berndt (1952), p. 82, refers to a *dua* moiety sun-woman, rising out of the sea and walking across the sky with a *mauwulan rangga* (ceremonial digging stick) in each hand.

[24] The Yirrkalla aborigines consider that Biminura is near Milingimbi. Berndt (1952), p. 139, records a song in which the *Djunkgao* sisters saw the sun setting behind Milingimbi.

[25] When *Djunkgao* was at Bilapinja Island he noted the sunrise and the light on the breaking waves. These were the subject of a song, p. 271.

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Cross; and the probable existence of a simple calendar, based on the movements of the heavenly bodies.

The myth of the moon as a man appears to be both universal and the most important in aboriginal astronomy.

At Groote Eylandt, the moon did no more than abduct a woman and her children as companions, p. 484; but on the mainland of Arnhem Land there are several myths which tell of how the moon brought death to the world, whilst he himself is eternally reincarnated, p. 493, p. 488, p. 495. Spencer and Gillen[26] record a similar myth from the Aranda tribe of Central Australia. This belief, however, is not universal, for Parker[27] states that, in the Euahlayi tribe of western New South Wales, the moon brings the children to the woman, and Mountford[28] was told by the natives of the northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia that the moon was once a man who, having been coaxed into the sky by his sister's sons, had been unable to return.

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The Groote Eylandt and Yirrkalla myths which link the waxing and waning of the moon with the tides are of interest. On the other hand, the sun, who is a woman, takes a minor place in aboriginal mythology. Spencer and Gillen[29] describe a sun ceremony. There are also Groote Eylandt and Yirrkalla myths of the sun, p. 481, p. 502.

Throughout the aboriginal star myths the stars in the constellation of Orion are regarded as a man or men and those of the Pleiades as a group of women. In Arnhem Land, p. 482, p. 493, p. 498, in the Wheelman tribe of Western Australia,[30] and among the aborigines of northern South Australia,[31] the Pleiades are wives and daughters of the men of Orion. In western Central Australia, the women of the Pleiades are always being pursued by the man of Orion,[32] and in Victoria[33] the Pleiades are a group of young women singing a tune, to which the men of Orion are dancing.

The myths associated with the Milky Way are usually, but not always, similar to each other. In Arnhem Land, p. 479, p. 487, p. 496, the Milky Way is a watercourse from which the sky people gather food. Macgraith[34] found that the Central Australian aborigines believe the Milky Way is a river which divides the sky people into two adjacent tribes. Parker[35] states that the Euahlayi tribe of New South Wales looked upon the Milky Way as a watercourse, and Howitt[36] mentions a similar belief among the aborigines of Queensland, New South Wales and northern South Australia. Smyth,[37] however, describes the Milky Way as the body of two enormous snakes which made the River Murray. The body of the snakes, however, may be a sky river.

The Magellan Clouds are always camps of sky people. At Groote Eylandt, p. 484, they are the camps of an old man and woman, and at Yirrkalla, p. 500,

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[26] Spencer and Gillen (1899), p. 564.

[27] Parker (1905), p. 50.

[28] Mountford (1937), field notes.

[29] Spencer and Gillen (1899), p. 549.

[30] Hassell (1934), p. 237.

[31] Mountford (1939), p. 105.

[32] Mountford (1948), p. 155.

[33] Smyth (1878), p. 434.

[34] Macgraith (1932), p. 19.

[35] Parker (1905), p. 95.

[36] Howitt (1904), p. 432.

[37] Smyth (1878), p. 434.

●171 those of two sisters. Among the Aranda[38] the Magellan Clouds are the camps of
*773 the two evil men of whom the aborigines are afraid, but further west among the desert tribes the clouds are the camps of two spirits, one of which is a good and
821 one an evil spirit.[39] In western New South Wales, a mother and a daughter live in the Magellan Clouds.[40]

In contrast to the widespread and similar myths of the moon, the Milky Way, the constellations of Orion and the Pleiades and of the Magellan Clouds, those belonging to the Southern Cross vary widely. At Groote Eylandt, p. 485, the stars of the Southern Cross are two fishermen and their cooking fires; at Yirrkalla, p. 496, a shark (the Pointers) chasing a stingray (the Cross) around the sky; and at Oenpelli, p. 487, a family of star-people. In western Central Australia, the Cross is the track of an eagle,[41] and in western New South Wales it is an eagle in the sky[42].

From the limited data collected on Arnhem Land astronomy, one can see in it the beginnings of a calendar, the arrival of the stars and their positions at sunrise or sunset denoting the time for certain happenings. Thus, at Groote Eylandt, p. 94, the wet season stops and the south-easterly winds start to blow when the constellation of Scorpio reaches a certain position in the evening sky; at Yirrkalla, the showing of Scorpio in the morning sky was a sign that the Malay fishermen would soon arrive to collect trepang, and when Arcturus is
[805] visible at sunrise the spike-rush, *rakia*, is ready for harvesting. There is little doubt that fuller investigation would show that the aborigines have evolved a workable calendar based on the movements of the heavenly bodies.

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[38] Spencer and Gillen (1899), p. 566.
[39] Mountford (1948), p. 156.
[40] Parker (1905), p. 97.
[41] Mountford (1940), field notes.
[42] Parker (1905), p. 97.

INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR A. P. ELKIN

Baldwin Spencer in his *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory*, 773 1914 (Chapter IX, and pp. 217–8) recorded myths which ascribed important creative and formative activities to culture-heroines, in 114 particular to Imberombera and Ungulla Robunbun in western Arnhem Land, and ceremonial activity together with original possession of the bullroarer, to Kunapipi women in the Roper River region. All alike left spirit-children at places along the routes of their journeyings, and the first two were responsible for the tribal and linguistic divisions in their region, having "sent forth" spirit-children to found the tribes.*

In 1937, Professor W. L. Warner's important book, *A Black* 114 *Civilization*, was published, giving the results of his field work in 1926–29 at Millingimbi (Crocodile Islands) and the neighbouring 773 region of north-east Arnhem Land. Half of it is a study of mythology 796 and ritual. Two of the most important figures are the Wawilak sisters, who named the animals and plants as they travelled from inland to the north along the Goyder River, and who, in an endeavour to ward off the great ancestral python, Yurlunggur, and to end the wet season, sang and danced the songs of four great rituals, one of which was the Gunabibi (Kunapipi). The Yurlunggur swallowed the two women and their babies, causing their deaths, but their spirits lived on and revealed the rituals to two Dreamtime men, so that the important past should not be forgotten. This included the [304] introduction of circumcision which the Wawalik had intended to perform on their sons (Warner, pp. 250–9). In the Gunabibi ritual, the Gunabibi is the bullroarer, and also symbolizes Yurlunggur who swallowed and regurgitated the two women and their sons (pp. 293–4). Another important ritual myth is about two Djunkgao sisters who came into the region from the south-east, naming natural species

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* Compare too the similar myth of the "big woman", Warahmoorungee, of the Iwaidja tribe, in this region, as given by Inspector Foelsche, "Notes on the [171] Aborigines of North Australia", *Journal, Royal Society of South Australia, Vol. V, p.* 17. This is the "Mother", "Waramurunggoindju", who, Mr. Berndt was informed by the Maung at Goulburn Island, came from the Macassan Islands, and eventually by way of Timor and Bathurst Island to Cape Don, the Iwaidja and other tribal territories, and finally to east Arnhem Land. R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section 3, to be published by the Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology.

114 as they came, making ritual-totemic wells or centres, and giving
birth to the ancestors of the present people. They made and carried
773 sacred totemic emblems, and instituted the Narra ritual in which
796 these are used; but some Dreamtime men stole the baskets in which
they kept these objects and performed the Narra—a theft which the
Djunkgao took in good grace (pp. 336–40).

[114] As we read these myths and the description of the associated
rituals, we detect a difference, at least in emphasis, in the rôles played
773 by women in the creative epoch in this region as compared with other
562 regions for which we have reliable information. According to the classic works of Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899) and *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (1904), and the later work of Carl Strehlow, *Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stamme in Zentral-Australien*, I, II and III, 1907, 1908, 1910, human beings arose from semi-human-animal forbears, or were given their forms in an operation performed by "self-existent" totemic beings on existing incomplete beings; and in some cases, too, in the more northern tribes, human beings just arose. There is no instance of one or two great culture-heroines being held responsible for natural features, tribes and languages, though women were included in many of the earliest groups of human wanderers; more explicitly the Unmatjera have a tradition of several groups of *ertwaininga* women who wandered across the country, carrying yamsticks, and leaving individuals behind at various spots, which became spirit totemic centres, from which these individuals went forth to be reincarnated.

In the sphere of ritual, however, the myths reflect a stage or period in which women took an active part and had full knowledge of sacred symbols. Thus, in one myth, three women from time to time painted themselves with sacred designs, carried the nurtunja (a sacred symbol), performed ceremonies and changed their totemic and subsection affiliations. In another, the Unthippa women in the course of their wanderings, used to carry off and circumcize any novices they found, an event to which reference is still made in circumcision ritual (*Native Tribes*, pp. 195–6, 433, 441–3; *Northern Tribes*, pp. 146, 150, 152–9).

171 If we compare the mythology of the centre and north-centre with
773 that of Arnhem Land as we knew it in 1937, we see that in both the
spirits of men and women pre-exist because of happenings in the
562 Dreamtime, and women in that period played an inner rôle in what
[774] is now ritual reserved for initiated men. In the former vast regions,
however, women did not form the country, name natural species, determine the tribal and linguistic divisions, nor institute ceremonies But this is just what the culture heroines of Arnhem Land were said to have done. This difference in power, or in degree of function, was sufficient to suggest further research in this region into the rôle of the

culture-heroine in mythology; and all the more so, as no such distinctively 771
creative powers were ascribed to females in the myths of 773
any other region then studied, such as the Kimberley Division of
Western Australia, the Great Victoria Desert, North Queensland, 562
nor South-East Australia. In the north-west and north-east of the
continent, the important creative culture-heroes are males and many
of them were at times in animal form. In the South-East not only was
the male aspect dominant, but there was only one great hero, for
each tribe or region, named here Bundjil, there Nurunderi, or
Baiami or Gulambra or Goin and so on.*

In 1939 my friend, Mr. W. E. Harney, who had spent many years [114]
in and around Arnhem Land, and has a greater and sounder knowledge
of Aboriginal custom, belief and ritual than any other layman
sent me some notes in which much prominence was given to the
"Old Woman," Kunapipi, both in doctrines and in ritual. After [794]
discussing the material with him, I was satisfied that in the Roper, 776
Macarthur and Victoria River areas, a very vivid cult of the "mother-goddess" 773
type was functioning. Her name varied, being Kunapipi,
Mumuna, Kliarin-Kliari, and so on, but she was usually referred to
as the "Old Woman" or the "Mother". She was the source of life in
man and nature, both in the Dreamtime or creative past and now.
In this activity she was associated with a great serpent, usually the
Rainbow serpent, who "made the road" into the womb for the preexistent [775]
spirits to be incarnated and reincarnated. She was also the
very earth itself, that from which living things came and on which
they depended for sustenance. This doctrine was expressed in the 796
Kunapipi ritual. In it her womb was represented, by a trench into
which the initiands were put, and from which they were reborn. In
addition, the bullroarer, also representing her womb, when swung
at the ritual became the sojourning symbol of each initiand's ritual
or "wood" spirit. After the ceremony, when the Yermalindji, the
symbol of the great snake, was burnt in the earth-womb, the bullroarer
was buried there also. Thus, the lad's ritual "shade" remained [775]
in Kunapipi, and did so until the disintegration of the symbol, when

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* I can speak from personal field work for all these regions except the north-east. See also articles in *Oceania*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 46-62, R. Piddington, "Karadjeri Initiation". Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 66-93, Ursula H. McConnel, "Myths of the Wikmunkan and Wiknatara Tribes"; *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, No. 4, pp. 452-477, Vol. VII, No. 1, pp. 69-105, "Totemic Hero Cults in the Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland"; Vol. IX, No. 4, pp. 382-404, A. Capell, "Mythology in Northern Kimberley". Vol. XIII, No. 3, pp. 255-260, and Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 31-53; "A Preliminary Report of Field Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", by R. and C. Berndt, *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945.

Also D. F. Thomson, "The Hero Cult, Initiation and Totemism on Cape York", *Journal, Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXIII, pp. 453-538; and "Notes on a Hero Cult from the Gulf of Carpentaria, North Queensland", *op. cit.* Vol. LXIV, pp. 217-236. A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 475-508.

It seems then that the Gunabibi (Kunapipi) as Professor Warner 177
saw it after coming through the Rainbarngo and being amalgamated
with the Wauwalak, did not necessarily diffuse east to Melville and 773
Arnhem Bays, though the Wauwalak myth may have done so. It is 796
more likely that it spread there up the coast from the Rose River
country; ultimately the "distributing" tribe was the same, the
Rembaranga (Rainbarngo) and the fusion with the Wauwalak on the
upper Goyder may have occurred before the Kunapipi reached Blue
Mud Bay.

In 1946, while at Roper River Mission, I was given a detailed myth
of the movement of the Mumuna (or Kunapipi group) and the ritual
(with no trace of the Wauwalak myth) from Blue Mud Bay south
along the coast to the Roper River, which was crossed about thirty
miles from its mouth, and shortly after, a Wadiri-Anyula man gave [115]
me an account of the journey of *Gilyeri-gilyeri mara-abana*, the
Travelling Woman, from the Roper, near the junction of the
Limmen, and of the spread of the ritual, through the Alawa and on
and on to Lake Woods and Newcastle Waters. Here the ritualists
linked up with the route of diffusion from the Lower Victoria River
through the Mudbara tribe and by Battle Creek.

This, incidentally, completed the circle of the Kunapipi route, for a study of the rituals and myths and traditions show that it also spread from the Victoria River east through the Wadman, Yangman and Mangarai territory and thence north to the Rembaranga, and on to Blue Mud Bay, and thence, as we have seen, south to the lower Roper, and so on to Newcastle Waters.

At the present time, too, some of the Kudjika songs of the Kuna- [533]
pipi of the Roper River side, which I heard at the Elsey, are on their
way south-west through Warlock Ponds and then eventually to Wave
Hill, west of Newcastle Waters, and on even to Wyndham, that is, to
East Kimberley.

The doctrines are still very real to the initiated Mangarai, whom 773
I have come to know during the past three years. We talk about the
myth or ritual; we mention the sacred key and pass words referring 796
to the "Mother", the bullroarer, the Yalmanindji, the "river" and
"billabong" (womb) on the ritual ground, or we repeat the words of 171
the chants: but let anyone pass by even thirty yards away and out of [123]
earshot—the subject is dropped immediately, until that person has
really gone by. And how interesting it is to hear on the Roper
almost the same ritual words as obtain at Yirrkalla, and then to hear
them again from Djauan and southern Rembaranga and others on
the Mainoru, south of Bulman Gorge, and 100 miles west again not
far from the Waterhouse! When I arrived at the latter place in
September, 1948, a Kunapipi ritual had been completed only a few
days before. I saw the headman and others who participated. There,
too, was the Kanalina and the Anggorna (Nanggoru) with the

773 Yeramalindji (Yalmanindji), a blackened mass, still in its original
shape, lying in the Nanggoru.

796 One special feature of this "Mother Place" was that on each of the
171 walls of both the Kanalina (the oval billabong) and the Nanggoru
[532] (the semi-circular trench or "river"), the rainbow serpent, here
called Muit, was engraved. Apart from what informants said, there
[346] was no mistaking the drawing. The walls were of hard clay and about
2 feet and a little more in depth.

Finally, the "Mother" ritual has spread north from the Lower Victoria River as far as Port Keats, where in 1944 the elders were assimilating the doctrine of the "Old Woman" (exoterically), but the desirable mother (esoterically), and the bullroarer with snake symbolism.*

The Appeal of the Kunapipi

A cult which spreads throughout a vast region as indicated in the
771 above outline, and spreads irresistibly, must satisfy a spiritual or
796 psychological need and make a captivating appeal. There is no mistaking
the grip which the doctrine of the "Mother" and the Snake
has on the initiated, or their fervour and faith. But, why does the
cult appeal and grip in this way?

Let us outline its significant features. It highlights the maternal,
nourishing, reproductive, and indeed creative, principle in nature and
man, though not denying the male principle. That is, it associates the
cycle of the tropical seasons, and the increase of human beings and of
natural species with the concept of Mother—of birth from the womb.
[831] Further, it correlates this with sexual activity in which the male or
inseminating principle is involved. In the former aspect, we have the
Mother, symbolized by the ceremonial "Mother Place", and in particular
by the earth womb, the *nanggoru*, for, indeed, she is the earth.
In the latter case we see the symbolism of the Great Snake: the
Rainbow Snake, and the Yermalindji.

Further, in the ritual, the male actors simulate sex intercourse,
796 which symbolizes both the impregnation or else the quickening of
786 the Mother herself, and also the intercourse of the animals represented
in the rite. It is done for her and through her for them and all
nature. Finally, the actual sexual intercourse between the actors and
selected women near the ceremonial ground, as part of the total
ritual, not only witnesses to the indispensable rôle of women in
reproduction, but also makes the "Mother's" life-producing principle
or power operative. Just as in arid Australia, the actors cause
blood from their arm vein or genital organ to flow on to the symbolic
representation of the totem or totemic ancestor, giving it or
[789] him power to increase its kind; so too in Arnhem Land the actors'

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* Mr. F. Parkes, a member of the Air Force, gained the confidence of these men, and recorded all he could.

the guise of an Ancestral Being) is the proselytizer, the carrier of the 121
germ of a religious idea, which is adopted by, and modified to suit, 771
the social group in which he finds himself. Whether he brought with 776
him the ingredients of that religion from his own "home", or whether 794
it took shape in consequence of his contact with the alien people, is a 773
matter for conjecture.

The diffusion of Aboriginal religious cults, such as the Kunapipi, 177
also presents some interesting features. A certain amount of more or
less "pure" evangelization has occurred in this respect; individual 794
cult leaders, of both historic and contemporary society, have been 797
interested in furthering the activities of the cult. But in their successful and unsuccessful attempts to introduce their particular beliefs into other groups, they take only the basis of their cult life, and do not as a rule attempt to superimpose their own cultural ideas and organization. In north-eastern Arnhem Land, for example, the Kunapipi,
recognized by natives themselves as an introduced theme, has been [182]
fairly well integrated with existing social organization, religious life, and secular beliefs; even its mythology has been altered to meet the demands of local ethics, while the alien songs are interpreted in the light of indigenous criteria. Nevertheless, the basic ideology and construction of the Kunapipi cult remain: and it is this aspect which
really concerns the proselytizer. The same process may be observed [171]
in other regions, such as western Arnhem Land, the Daly River-Port Keats area, and west-central Northern Territory.

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A word should be said concerning the presentation of Kunapipi 128
Song Cycles (that is, in Chapters VII, VIII, X, and XI). Their value lies in their substantiation of the cult's doctrine, explaining its outward expression in ritual and in the use of ceremonial emblems and objects. Such traditional songs ensure that the original intent of the cult is not lost or radically misinterpreted. To-day, however, misinterpretation is possible as a result of conflicting loyalties arising from the contact of Aboriginal with European culture. In order to restrict ourselves to the literal interpretation of these songs, it has been found necessary to present them with an interlinear translation, a general rendering, and a brief commentary based on native interpretation: this method makes available the maximum amount of
data. The phonetic script used conforms to that of the International [104]
Phonetic Association,[2] amended for use in Australia by Dr. A. Capell.[3] [126]

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[2] G. Noel-Armfield, *General Phonetics*, 1931, pp. 21-23. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945, pp. 262-264, or *Oceania*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 50-52.

[3] A. Capell, *Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages*, Sydney, 1945 (reprinted from *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 144-176). Since the complete phonetic script was not available for rendering native words in this volume, some equivalents in ordinary English lettering have been used.

773 so it relates, the Djanggawul sisters themselves were the sole guard-
ians of the religious objects and associated ceremonies. They were
796 well acquainted with all the sacred ritual and doctrine, because this
intimately concerned them; the symbols they used, and their actions
in dancing, made reference to the sexual act, to pregnancy and birth.
Aboriginal men to-day speak definitely on this point: "Then we
had nothing: no sacred objects, no sacred ceremonies, the women
had everything." So one day, the myth continues, the men stole the
women's objects while they were out collecting mussels; they took
them back to their own camp, and there performed the special sacred
dancing. The Djanggawul sisters, coming back with their shellfish,
found that their *rangga* had disappeared. They heard, in the distance,
the singing of the men; and finally they decided that perhaps it was
just as well that the men had taken their *rangga*. It would save them
a lot of trouble, they agreed; now the men could carry out most of
the ritual for them, while they busied themselves chiefly with
raising families and collecting food. In this way, their true function
as Fertility Mothers became established. Such an attitude is not con-
[171] fined to north-eastern Arnhem Land, but appears in the mythology
of other Australian Aboriginal tribes. However, women still play
[562] an important part in sacred ritual, for instance in the Kunapipi.

This is a brief summary of the complete version, which gives in
616 detail the main theology of the *dua* moiety. To both *dua* and *jiritja*
796 men and women it is of major importance, for men of both moieties
take part in the *dua nara* ceremonies, although *dua* men alone are the
leaders, singers and principal dancers. The Djanggawul ritual is
concerned with "higher" religious thought, and most of it with
sacred dancing on a sacred ground where a *nara* "shade" or hut has
been constructed. This hut represents the womb; in it the *rangga*
are stored, and from it men emerge, to posture and dance ritually
while holding them.

616 If the Djanggawul are important to the *dua*, Laintjung and his son
Banaitja are equally so to the *jiritja* group of clans who hold the
773 *jiritja nara* ceremonies. The Male Ancestral Beings Laintjung and
Banaitja, with certain female counterparts, dominate *jiritja* religious
ideology; but their mythology is not nearly so vivid as that of the
Djanggawul, nor are their ceremonies so important. Laintjung came
from the sea near Blue Mud Bay, and established his cult. There, and
at nearby places, he distributed sacred totemic designs to *jiritja*
clans; he had also brought with him sacred *rangga*, the *jiritja* "high"
totems, which he gave into the custody of the clans. Although much
[789] of the Laintjung ritual also relates to the increase of the natural
species, most is only indirectly related to fertility.

When his father died, Banaitja desired to broaden and put into practice some of Laintjung's religious concepts; but his efforts aroused general antagonism, and at last he was put to death. Later,

however, the people to whom Laintjung had given his sacred designs 616
and *rangga* were sorry for what they had done, and made the "likeness" 773
of Banaitja in paperbark bound on a framework of cane. The
influence of Laintjung and Banaitja, in spite of their importance, did [171]
not cover such a wide area as that of some other Ancestral Beings;
and the aborigines account for this by explaining that Banaitja
"was killed at an early age, before he had the opportunity of travelling
widely throughout this region".

Most of the great religious myths of this region are associated [177]
with the *dua* moiety, the more conservative section; it is the *jiritja*
which embraces new and "alien" ideas and activities. From time to 773
time, fully-initiated *dua* and *jiritja* men are shown the "high" 616
rangga, and through the years they become increasingly familiar
with the complex ritual. This admission to sacred knowledge, however, 561
is not thought comparable to an initiation or age-grading 796
ceremony: it is more in the nature of a revelation through which
they become acquainted with the inner substance of religious thought
and expression. The *dua* Wauwalak myth, on the other hand, is of
general importance, and is associated with the three sacred "age-grading"
ceremonies of this north-eastern region. There is also much
sacred ritual not concerned with age-grading. Both *dua* and *jiritja* [533]
men take part in this, and it incorporates some purely *jiritja* songs
belonging to separate cycles.

The two Wauwalak sisters are associated with the concept of 773
fertility, owing mainly to their connection with birth, after-birth 796
blood, and menstruation. The latter receives a great deal of attention
in Yirrkalla thought. Aboriginal women are all potential [841]
Wauwalaks; and a great deal of their behaviour, particularly at
puberty, and when menstruation ceases at pregnancy, is said to be
based on that of the Two Sisters. The Wauwalak myth is most
important to these north-eastern Arnhem Landers, and they make
frequent references to it. It has, as mentioned, far more general
application than have the Djanggawul and Laintjung cycles; and the
three separate ceremonies which concern it here are each of a different
nature. The commonest is the *djunggawon*, used primarily for
initiation; ideally, it extends over a couple of months, and includes, [881]
in addition to circumcision and camp dancing, a certain amount of
ritual which is not fully revealed, as in the case of the Djanggawul.
The second of these three ceremonies is the *kunapipi*, which will be
dealt with in the following chapters. The third is the *ngu:rlmak*
ceremony, performed to-day only at rare intervals. It is considered
to be far more important than either the *djunggawon* or the *kunapipi*,
but less so than the Djanggawul and Laintjung *dua* and *jiritja nara*
rituals.

There are also a number of subsidiary ceremonies, related in some degree to these two main cycles, but not by any means so outstanding.

CHAPTER II

KUNAPIPI, THE SACRED CULT

171 Throughout Arnhem Land, and the Northern Territory south of
Yirrkalla, around and below the Roper River; west across the plains
794 and swamps of the Buffalo country to the Daly River, and beyond,
towards Port Keats and Timber Creek, and further west into Western Australia: south-west into the central cattle country around Victoria River Downs, Wave Hill, Gordon Downs, towards Hall's Creek in the Eastern Kimberleys; through inhospitable desert regions around Tanami and the Granites, and eastwards across the main North-South Road; through the tribal territories of groups with differing cultures and language—the sacred name of Kunapipi is known.

The Kunapipi Cult is diffused over an immense area, and is known sometimes by alternate names; but though its rituals and ceremonies may differ in some minor points, and its doctrine may vary, its intent remains fundamentally the same, and its background is similar throughout all these areas.

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the name Kunapipi expresses a dual concept: on the one hand it refers to a Fertility Mother, or Mothers, and on the other to the great Rainbow Snake. This is the symbolism of the Uterus and the Penis, natural instruments of fecundity. In other areas, such as the Daly River, or central-western Northern Territory, the term Kunapipi (although still known) changes to Kalwadi, or to Kadjari, translated into English as "Old Woman", or described as "Mother belonging to you and me". In the north-western and central-western regions of the Northern Territory, more stress is placed on the concept of a Fertility Mother, and less on the Rainbow Snake. In the Milingimbi region, when discussing the Kunapipi,[1] Professor Lloyd Warner accentuates the importance of the great Rock Pythons who swallowed the Wauwalak Sisters, but overlooks the underlying significance of the Two Sisters as Fertility Mothers.

171 Throughout the areas mentioned, a basic feature of Aboriginal
religion is the belief in an Original Mother (or Mothers), herself a
776 Creative Being and the essence of fertility and abundance. In western
794 Arnhem Land the Mother is the inspiration and sponsor of the
u:ba:r (equivalent to the north-eastern Arnhem Land *uwar* of the

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773 [1] L. Warner, *A Black Civilization*, 1937, pp. 290-311, and 372-375.

ngu:rlmak ritual) and *ma'ralin* cults;[2] on Bathurst and Melville Islands 171
the Earth Mothers are said to have brought into being the human 776
and natural species, and to have introduced their system of social
organization. The now virtually extinct Laraki:a shared this same 794
cult; and so did the Daly River people who built circular stone 773
structures to symbolize the wombs of their creative Mothers.* The cult of Kalwadi is still strong in the north-western quarter of the Territory; as the Kadjari, it spreads down to the central-west, where it is met by another Kadjari cult from the Tanami-Granites desert, and the Billaluna region in Western Australia.

This Mother[3] is always present behind the ritual, the dancing and the singing. She is a symbol of the productive qualities of the earth, the eternal replenisher of human, animal and natural resources; it was from her uterus that human and totemic beings came forth. She has no totem herself, nor is she a totemic concept; she does not herself perform totemic ritual, although her neophytes do. In these areas, she is the background of all totemic ceremony, an "eternal" explanation and symbol of the Aboriginal way of life, with its continual expectation of rebirth.

In her sacred mythology she may be alone, or may appear as Two Sisters; or, in some areas, the Two Sisters may be described as her daughters. For example, from the Roper River westwards, through the Victoria River district into Western Australia, her daughters are the exotic and beautiful Mungamunga, representing an ideal of young aboriginal womanhood. Although the Mungamunga are themselves associated with their Mother in sacred ritual (see Chapters X and XI), they do not play an important part; they are concerned principally with secret magico-religious ceremonies of women, and with love magic of both sexes.

The Mother herself, Kunapipi, Kalwadi or Kadjari, is represented in certain parts of the mythology as a perpetually pregnant woman, who in the Dream-Time let out from her uterus human beings, the progenitors of the present natives. She was responsible too for sending out spirits of the natural species from season to season, to ensure their continual increase. In this she did not act entirely alone, but in association with a Rainbow Snake, the symbolic Penis, which completed the dual concept. This aspect is particularly important, for it reflects the part played by the male in fertilization.

In a remarkable series of drawings from central-western Northern

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[2] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land* (volume to be published by the Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, New York), Chapter IV, Sections I to VIII.

*Knut Dahl, *In Savage Australia*, London, 1926, pp. 233-4, figs. 9-10 This writer records stone structures in the vicinity of the Mary River, in "Buffalo country", west of the western Arnhem Land fringe.

[3] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, The Eternal Ones of the Dream, *Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, pp. 67-78, illustrated (3 plates).

171 Territory,[4] artists depict human beings, as totemites, flowing from
794 the uterus of the Mother into the round "ring place" (or ceremonial
773 ground) for the performance of sacred rites. The "ring place" is
776 itself the uterus of the Mother. To-day, in the really important sacred
ceremonies, a special ring place is used for the performance of these
rituals. As the neophytes leave the camp for the sacred ground, they
[778] themselves are said to become increasingly sacred, and to enter the
Mother; they go into her uterus, the ring place, as happened in the
beginning. When the ritual is completed the Mother "lets them out";
they emerge from the ring place, and pass once more into ordinary
life. These ring places vary in shape from place to place, but all symbolize
the Mother's uterus. The sacred ceremonies associated with
this Fertility Woman are called in pidgin English "Big Sunday",
[778] inferring a sacred atmosphere from the European connotation of the
word Sunday, while the term refers also to "sandy place", the soft
ground upon which the sacred dancing is performed. The appellation
"Big Sunday", in some regions, may also be derived from the term
"Centre" place, which refers to the sacred ceremonial ground.

All Kunapipi ritual, irrespective of region, has thus a common
796 theme. We find in it the return to the Mother's uterus, and the
794 eventual emergence, when the postulants come out from their sacred
ritual refreshed, and as "new" men (that is, it is like a "rebirth"):
771 this symbolic enactment of birth brings with it a renewal of ideals,
energy and faith. Fertility and the supplying of food, sexual pleasure
831 and satisfaction, solidarity within the group, and an undividing
faith in the divine truth of the cult—all these elements are present.
Food and sex, fundamental in human life, and consequently in
religion, owe their continuance, it is said, to the Eternal Mother.
It is not surprising that people living in such close proximity to
nature, with few artificial distractions, should recognise the fundamental
importance of female fertility, and see in it a central theme of
religion.

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171 In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the Kunapipi cult is not yet
deeply entrenched, since it has been introduced within comparatively
794 recent times. Its earliest infiltration took place through the Reinbaranga
(sometimes termed Rembranga, and localized in south-
177 western Arnhem Land) and Burera tribes and so into Milingimbi,
where Professor L. Warner witnessed some of its rituals twenty years
ago. From this centre it spread westwards towards Goulburn
Islands and Oenpelli,[5] and eastwards to Elcho Island and Arnhem
Bay. But it does not seem to have gripped, at that time, the imagina-

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[4] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *op. cit. Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Plates I to III; and R. and C. Berndt, Aboriginal Art in Central-Western Northern Territory, *Meanjin*, Spring, 1950, pp. 183–188, ten plates.

[5] R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section IX.

tion of the people further east, around Yirrkalla, Cape Arnhem and 171
Caledon Bay.

It was not until perhaps fifteen years ago that the cult gradually 794
spread northwards from Rose River, where its custodians were the 177
Nungguboiju group who had obtained it from the Roper River
people, particularly from the Mangarei-Ma:ra-Alawa tribes. The
Lultma'rangu (*dua* moiety), Dalwongu and Mararba (*jiritja* moiety)
linguistic groups were the first to come within its influence; they
mixed with people from Rose River to perform Kunapipi ceremonies
around Caledon and Blue Mud Bays, and occasional Kunapipi
rituals were held round about Yirrkalla.

But although these people did perform the Kunapipi at relevant 171
seasons, this did not take the place of indigenous religious belief and 177
practice. The great ceremonies of the *dua* and *jiritja* moiety *nara* were
still the most important; and the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* rituals, 616
associated with the two Wauwalak Sisters and the Rock Pythons, 794
retained their importance in the minds of the north-eastern people. 796
Kunapipi in this area was subsidiary, whereas in most of the other
areas mentioned above her rituals held a paramount position.

The introduced Kunapipi cult brought with it all its attendant 177
ritual and ceremonial activity, but apparently its original mythology
(see Chapters IX and X) became merged with that of the Wauwalak.[6] 184
It was, in consequence, more readily accepted by the local people, 773
for the Wauwalak myth-cycle embraces much of the indigenous
religion. Thus, instead of becoming just another introduced ceremony, 794
the Kunapipi became a cult associated with a series of cults, having 796
roots in indigenous mythology. The Wauwalak mythology had much
in common with that of the southern Kunapipi. Both possessed the
same concept of fertility. The Wauwalak sisters became indirectly
the dual Mothers, continually replenishing the earth with human [776]
beings and with the natural species. Even the Rainbow Snake was
present, in the form of the Rock Pythons, who finally swallowed the
Sisters. Fundamentally, too, the arrangement of the sacred dancing
ground, and much of the incidental ceremony (when the special
Kunapipi objects are not used) are similar to those of the *djunggawon*
and *ngu:rlmak* rituals.

One aspect of the Kunapipi is slightly at variance with local 773
indigenous belief. In north-eastern Arnhem Land the Fertility 776
Mothers are the sisters of Djanggawul, Pildjiwuraroiju and Miralaitj.
The Wauwalak, although associated with the idea of fertility, are not 184
concerned with human or animal creation: they are said to be the 794
daughters of the elder Djanggawul sister, removed from her uterus
by her Brother. According to conventional Kunapipi mythology,

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[6] The Wauwalak mythology itself was introduced much earlier into north-eastern Arnhem Land, its original source being found in the mythology of the Kunapipi: *vide* Chapters IX and X.

184 773 776 794 the Mother (or Mothers), represented quite often by Two Sisters even in central-western Northern Territory, is the creative Being; so from this point of view the Wauwalak cycle, now substantiating the introduced Kunapipi, should possess Two Sisters who are themselves creative Beings. Local belief however accords this status only to the Djanggawul; but since the Wauwalak are their daughters, the original doctrine is not greatly inconvenienced. The creative Mothers may still be the Djanggawul, making their appearance through the Wauwalak Sisters, while the Wauwalak themselves are the Mungamunga of the south.

773 794 796 The actual meaning of the name Kunapipi is not easy to discover. The cult itself, with its relevant ceremonies, and the myth that substantiates the ritual, is Kunapipi, and this, in most areas mentioned above, is translated as the "Mother", or "Old Woman". The term "old" in this context signifies status and age, although not elderly appearance. Dr. Warner[7] notes that Kunapipi (spelt "Gunabibi") is [114] one name of the Pythons which swallowed the Wauwalak; but, as mentioned above, this writer stresses the importance of the Snakes at the expense of the Fertility Mothers, and this element is by far the most apparent in north-eastern Arnhem Land religion.

192 304 831 At Yirrkalla, the name Kunapipi is said to have two meanings. First, the word Kunapipi means "whistle-cock" (that is, a subincisure): for these ceremonies came up from the Rose and the [171] Roper Rivers where subincision is general, whereas throughout the greater part of north-eastern Arnhem Land only circumcision is practised. The ceremonies of Kunapipi in the Yirrkalla region may also be termed *wiri:i* or *wira'i*, meaning "incisure". But Kunapipi means also the uterus of the Mother. That is, the incised penis symbolizes the snake (Python or Rainbow Snake), and the incisure itself the uterus. Symbolically, then, the subincised male member represents both the female and the male organs, essential in the process of fructification.

More generally, however, the term Kunapipi is said to mean the Mother, and in isolated cases the Snake, both being accepted versions. It is because Kunapipi is translated as Fertility Mother, through the greater part of the Northern Territory, that we have preferred to use that appellation.

794 796 184 A number of ceremonies throughout the northern half of the Northern Territory are associated with Fertility Mothers and Rainbow (or Great) Snakes; and it is possible that the majority of these cults are linked with one another, even if their outward expressions are dissimilar. This aspect requires intensive study, including the collection of mythological texts, and analysis of relevant ritual and songs. The Kunapipi cult, however, consists of certain distinctive elements, that are found throughout the areas we have mentioned.

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[7] L. Warner, *op. cit*, p. 294.

the men's duplicity. This is particularly apparent in the Djanggawul 562
myth (*vide*, for example, Chapters I and IV). Merely because they do 773
not join in certain of the most sacred mysteries, women do not feel
"left out" of things, or pushed aside into what has been termed by 794
some writers a profane existence, with attendant feelings of inferiority. 796
On the contrary, they realize that they have a supplementary
function in maintaining camp dancing, and answering the men's
ritualistic calls from the sacred ground. It is necessary, for instance,
that they prepare food for the men at such times, and observe certain
tabus. A woman must know her own totemic clan songs, inherited [424]
from her father, and to a lesser extent those of her mother, and be
able to sing them on appropriate occasions. She must know the
correct dance movements and steps to accompany the men's singing
in the "outside" ceremonies, as well as in the sacred rituals where
she has her own part to play. There is no jealousy of the men's
performances alone on the sacred ground. The men, so women say,
are performing these ceremonies not only for themselves, but for all
the people in general. This is simply a normal extension of the [462]
sexual division of labour and activity.

* * * *

The story of the Wauwalak is rarely told in prose by a story-teller 533
of this region. Usually it is transmitted from one group of men to
another, through the generations, in ritual, accompanied by explanations, 773
on the ceremonial ground. Moreover, the whole myth is
related in the sacred "inside" Wauwalak cycle of some hundreds of
songs, in two main series: the "inside" Bush cycle, and the "inside"
seaside cycle, each describing in detail the adventures of the Sisters.
There are also the "outside" (secular) Bush and seaside cycles, sung
in the main camp to the dancing of women: these continue the story,
and reveal many aspects of the myth. Each one of these songs is
representative of the very best in native poetry,[1] which it is not
possible to set down in the bare general translation presented here.

The Wauwalak myth begins in a region usually unidentified (*vide* 171
Chapter IX), said vaguely to be somewhere south in the "Bush".
This means, perhaps, that the Wauwalak sisters came from the direction 773
of the Roper River, the hypothetical home of the Kunapipi 776
Mother and her two daughters, the Mungamunga. In any case, the
Wauwalak came northwards at an early period, towards the mainland
opposite the Crocodile Islands (that is, near Milingimbi),
bringing with them the rituals of the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak*.
Then the myth itself became to some extent localized in northern
Arnhem Land. It is on the mainland south of Milingimbi that the
most sacred totemic sites connected with the Wauwalak are found;

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[1] This is reserved for a detailed study of the Wauwalak Cycle in relation to the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* ceremonies.

171 and it was to this region, apparently within historic times, that the
773 Kunapipi found its way and finally became established. On the
eastern side of Arnhem Land we hear little of the local travels and
776 adventures of the Wauwalak: all the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak*
ritual of that area is inspired by the myth which centres around this
country near Milingimbi. One version only, endeavouring apparently
to weld the Wauwalak mythology more closely to the Rose River
Kunapipi, relates that the Two Sisters came up from the Roper
River through Nungguboiju territory to Rose River, and continued
directly up the coast to Kararwu, at Arnhem Bay.

773 The Wauwalak sisters, one older and one younger, left their home territory, the land of the *dua* Wauwalak people. Before leaving, the elder sister had incestuous relations with a clansman, and as a result she became pregnant. She was called *gungman* (that is, a mature child-bearing woman), while the younger girl, or *wirlkul*, was *kalngawona* (that is, having no child). They travelled in the direction of Muruwul (or Mu :ruwol) sacred waterhole, naming all the animals, birds and plants. Both of them carried stone spears, and wore decorative head-bands of feathered string and cane armlets: the younger sister, the *wirlkul*, wore a breast girdle of woven fibre, which fitted under her shoulder blades and her swelling breasts. They walked along, killing iguana, opossum, bandicoot, bush rat and kangaroo for food, and collecting yams. As they gathered these, placing them in their large *bulpul* dilly-bag, they said, "You will be *mareiin* later on". That is, the animals, yams, and so on would become sacred: they would be *rangga* objects, and be commemorated in ceremony.

The women came at last to Gru :awona, and the younger sister said: "We'll have a rest here".

"All right, sister", replied the other. "I feel my baby moving inside, and it will soon come out."

They made a fire and rested there. A little later, this elder sister
[616] gave birth to a female child, who belonged to the *jiritja* moiety,
although because of the incestuous union its father had been *dua*.
They remained at this place, but the afterbirth blood was still flowing
when the elder sister was walking about.

When she was well enough to move, they continued their journey towards Muruwul, which was not far from the sea-coast. The afterbirth blood was still running when they reached the sacred tabued well (or waterhole), and a trail of blood drops had been left all along the track. At Muruwul they made fire, and took some food from their dilly-bag for cooking.

First they placed an opossum on the fire to roast; but as soon as the creature began to grow warm, it got up and ran away. Then they tried to cook a bandicoot, but this too rose from the fire and ran away. The iguana and the rat, and all the other animals, did the same.

rain towards the billabong (1). 21 depicts a *gungalung* (big-headed 532
gecko lizard), playing around the Muruwul billabong after the rain;
for these lizards always come out at the beginning of the rainy season, 773
"and follow up the Julunggul".

This is a remarkable drawing of one aspect of sacred mythology in this region; it belongs to a large series dealing with all aspects of religious doctrine in north-eastern Arnhem Land.

This version tells us something of what happened to the Wauwalak after their swallowing. The first version also deals briefly with this aspect, as follows:

After the swallowing, the female Julunggul returned to Muruwul;
there she vomited the Wauwalak and child, who were revivified by
the bites of the ants, but were eventually re-swallowed. The Wau-
walak spirits are still at the sacred well: "we can't see them, although [776]
they can see us, for now they belong to Julunggul". When they see
human beings coming to this site, the Julunggul swallows them
again in their spirit form, "for they are unable to walk about like
ordinary people".

The Wauwalak-Julunggul mythology serves to substantiate the 773
Kunapipi rituals: a co-ordinating thread links the various events
set out in the story, and these are symbolically expressed in the 796
ceremonies. This myth is distributed among the three rituals already
mentioned, the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak*; the *ma:ndiwala*
(the *marndiella* ceremony of Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 329–334), localized
around the Roper and Rose Rivers, has not yet reached north-east [171]
Arnhem Land. Each of them expresses a particular feature of the
myth.

The Kunapipi, adapted as it is to local traditional needs, has lost 773
none of its symbolism and intent. In conventional Kunapipi myth-
ology one of the principal themes is the Fertility Mother's pregnancy, 776
and her giving birth to "Dreaming" folk: these people she kept in 796
her womb, and "let them out" from time to time to perform sacred
ritual. Finally, there is her death, and the totemites' enactment of the
returning to and leaving the Mother's womb. The continual birth
and rebirth of the totemites symbolize the sequence of the seasons, [805]
for Kunapipi had the power to send out the spirits of all the natural
species. She was accompanied by the Rainbow Snake, her male
counterpart.

At Yirrkalla, the Fertility Mothers are the Wauwalak: the pecu- 773
liarly female characteristics of menstruation and afterbirth blood
accentuate the concept of procreation. The presence of the Pythons 776
(the male and female Snakes), their ejaculation of saliva (semen), 831
their entry into the *murlk*, and the swallowing, complete the theme.
The actual swallowing, said to mean coitus, may also symbolize the
"return of the Wauwalak to the uterus of their Mother", as in con-

ground, is principally concerned with ceremonial intercourse, an 532
integral part of the Kunapipi, taking place on the sacred ground. 796
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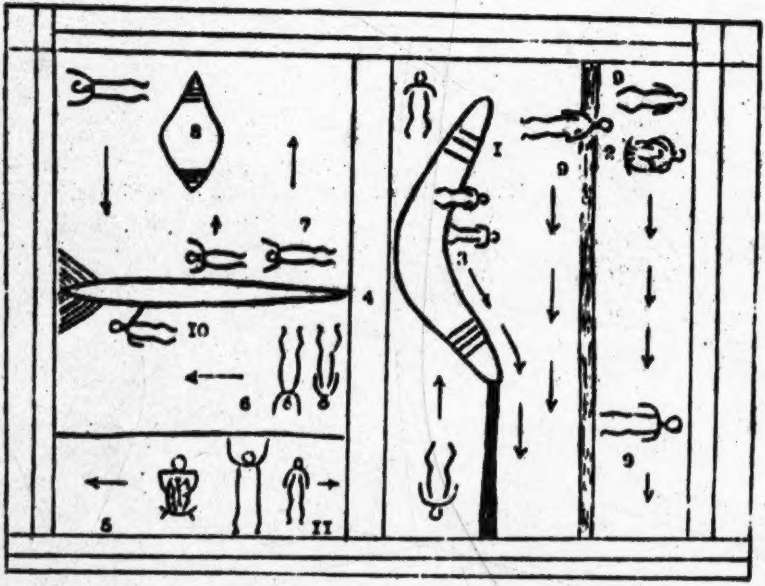

Text Figure 5.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XVII.

Ceremonial intercourse on the sacred ground.

On the right hand side of this drawing is the *jilparindji* or *kalawal* 532
boomerang (1); it occupies the place of the *kanala* in the drawing 796
and is drawn in much the same way. (This particular aspect requires
further attention, but cannot be elaborated here.) It is this boom- 881
erang (usually designed a little differently, with a groove at the centre) 833
which is used in ritual defloration on the Kunapipi ground, before
ceremonial coitus. That is to say, young girls have their hymens [304]
pierced prior to intercourse on the ceremonial ground; others,
whose hymens have already been broken through normal pre- [836]
marital coitus, have the end of the boomerang placed symbolically
in the vagina. In the Rose River region, this form of defloration is a [171]
counterpart of the subincision rite, and neither takes place in the
north-eastern part of Arnhem Land. In the long *jiritja* Rose River
Love Song cycle, known at Yirrkalla, defloration and ritual copula-

537 tion are discussed in detail: this aspect will, however, be dealt with
796 later.[7]

833 Here we are concerned principally with sexual intercourse on the
sacred ground, and defloration is incidental; but it does have an
881 important bearing on Kunapipi mythology. (*Vide* Chapter X, Song
[773] 45, when it is mentioned that the Mungamunga were "opened" for
coitus; the ritual in the Rose River Kunapipi commemorates this
[171] mythological event, while other examples could be taken from Yirrkalla mythology to substantiate this rite of defloration.)

On the far right hand side of the drawing are male *gurung* having coitus with their normally tabu-ed female *mukul* (*vide* Chapter IV), as Kunapipi sexual partners (2), while other men (9) await their turn. It is these men who first "open up" the young girls with the boomerang, and then copulate with them. This rite is termed the *nukanmiri*. The drawing of the man and woman performing the sexual act is executed in the stylized traditional manner, so that the two figures merge (2): the man bends forward, grasping his partner at the back so that his arms pass under hers, while the woman clasps him with hands gripped at his back. She is lying on the ground with legs apart, her thighs resting on his hips, and her feet are crossed at his back; *vide* Chapter IV. footnote 14.

Ranged along and around the boomerang (1) are the brothers (3) of the girls and women with whom the men are copulating; they stand with their backs turned. They do not look at their sisters hav-
[593] ing coitus, in case they should be "shamed" (a manifestation of the
deep-rooted local tabu between brother and sister). Instead, they sing while this is taking place, and do not themselves have ceremonial intercourse; their turn comes when the next Kunapipi is performed.

A focal point on the left hand side of the drawing is the *gundaru jelmalandji* (4), held by one man (10), while below it is a row of men (6) who are actual or classificatory husbands to the women having coitus on the opposite section (that is, 2). These husbands (like those at 9) await their turn with women (5) who are the "wives" (actual or otherwise) of the men on the opposite side (9); these women are already having coitus (5), and beside them (11) other men are waiting. Around the *nanggaru* (8) are men (7) dancing the opossum dance: they are the fathers (actual or classificatory) of both groups of women (at 5 and 2).

The fifth drawing,[8] Plate XIII and text figure 6, in black, red, green, blue, yellow and pencil, shows the sacred ground, with its essential emblems and plan: women are awaiting ceremonial intercourse,

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[7] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*. In Chapter IV it was mentioned that only married women attended the Kunapipi ritual of ceremonial copulation; this was a Yirrkalla variant.

[8] Reference: No. 3, *Field-Notes*, Book 28, Series B, R. Berndt.

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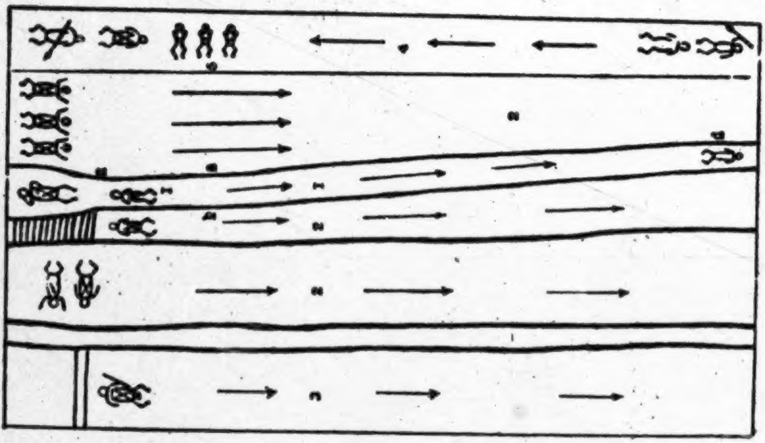
The sixth and final drawing,[9] Plate XIV and text figure 7, in black, green, yellow, red, and blue, represents the last stage of the Kunapipi.



Text Figure 7.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XIV.
The last stage of the Kunapipi.

Across the centre of the drawing (1) is the *djepalmandji*, with its two rails (1 *a* and *b*) supported at either end on forked sticks (1 *c* and *d*). In each forked stick sits a *jiritja* man, repeatedly calling out. Under the boughs and branches strewn over the rails are the *wari* and *muru*.

Below the *djepalmandji* is a row of *jiritja* and *dua* dancing men (2); they move around the *djepalmandji*. On either side of the *djepalmandji* are other men (2) dancing. Further below, a row of men (3) wearing opossum-fur pubic coverings, and carrying spears, dances on to the *djepalmandji* ground. Above, a row of men (4) leads some novices (5) towards the forked stick "shade". The ground is now arranged ready for the entry of the women, who are called by the two *jiritja* men sitting in the forks of the *djepalmandji*.

● [171] These drawings, then, reveal concisely the main features of the Kunapipi ceremonies. They show striking similarity to a collection of Kunapipi (Kalwadi) drawings obtained in the central-western part of the Northern Territory.

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[9] Reference: No. 4, Series B, *Field-Notes*, Book 28, R. Berndt.

APPENDIX 1

171
794 In the main body of this work some mention has been made of
ceremonial copulation during the performance of the Kunapipi.
796 Our examples were taken principally from north-eastern and south-
ern Arnhem Land, with reference to the Roper River region; and
831 for comparison with these the following data from western Arnhem
Land are presented.

During our field work in the western Arnhem Land region, at the
Goulburn Islands and Oenpelli, little reference was made to the
Kunapipi ceremonies;[1] it was said that these were introduced by
[177] Reinbaranga people from the south and south-east, in the direction
of the Roper River, or that they came from the Milingimbi area to
the east.

Recently, however, the writer's chief informant at South Goulburn
[115] Island, a Maung man named Small Ngolaman (or Nangolominj),
who is incidentally one of the very few literate aborigines on the north coast of the Northern Territory, and who has been "keeping track" of certain problems in the region during our absence, writes that the Kunapipi is known to some of the mainland men who visit Goulburn Island. The Kunapipi, as we are already aware, is carried out in the vicinity of Oenpelli, and in the upper Liverpool River area, under the auspices of Reinbaranga or Milingimbi leaders, and is known (but not practised) at Goulburn Island.

Small Ngolaman's preliminary statement[2] reveals some very interesting features; for example, the use of one girl on the sacred ground needs more accompanying data, since it bears a striking similarity to the more western type, as carried out by the old Laraki:a
tribe; this will however be dealt with later. Ngolaman's informant
[115] was a Maung man, named Inmindjur.

"Messengers are sent out, notifying the various groups that the
[203] Kunapipi is to be held. When the people come in to the ceremonial
camp, the rituals begin. The Kunapipi headman chooses a young
794 girl, and takes her away from the main camp to the sacred ground.
She is placed in a big bough shade or hut, recently built by the young
796 initiated men; she lies there on her back. Two holes are dug, one on
831 each side of her; a strong post is placed in each, and rammed

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1. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land,* Chapter IV, Section IX.
2. *Correspondence* to R. Berndt, October 4th, 1948.

of the natives of North-eastern Arnhem Land, and to show [121]
how the impact upon these primitive hunting people of a 177
virile culture from Indonesia, which has probably occur- 431
red only during the past two hundred years, has stimulated a remarkable ceremonial exchange cycle so that goods were passed far inland from the coast, while others were drawn from places hundreds of miles to the southward. This cycle, though in itself primarily social and not economic, supplies the motive force, the "drive", under cover of which an elaborate system of *ceremonial exchange* has been developed. This in turn furnishes the mechanism for the circulation of wealth or *gerri* (applied collectively to "goods" or "possessions", to material wealth), that would have been restricted, or at least rendered difficult, by the social structure of these people without the influence of the culture from Indonesia.[5]

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[5] The fact that ceremonial exchange systems appear to have been [171]
widespread in Australia has been pointed out (see page 2). But the 619
special type of local organisation which occurred in Arnhem Land, 721
combined with the war-like reputation enjoyed by these people, would have tended to restrict communication. A remarkable feature of the social organisation of Arnhem Land north of a line from Bennet Bay and east of Cape Stewart, is the absence of any tribal organisation. The absence of tribal organisation to provide a basis for a wider solidarity, such as exists in neighbouring territories, has tended, as is shown on pages 9 to 13, to foster an intense internal solidarity within the clan, and within the larger group which consists of an aggregation of clans, called *mälla*; and thus to intensify the opposition with other groups. The effect of this social organisation, which was probably unstable, seems to be reflected in the intense and bitter rivalry and almost constant fighting, which raged among the hordes in far Eastern Arnhem Land, and which was responsible for many deaths. These are not conditions which encourage free intercourse and communication between groups widely separated, and although an extensive ceremonial exchange system undoubtedly existed long before visitors from the

ship" called *wäkkälmändji*[27] exists. Here again this right [421] to use the property of a *mari* (always a distant or "outside" 602 *mari* under the kinship system) is part of the pattern of extreme licence in behaviour which is permitted or even obligatory between certain men who stand in the relationship of *mari* ⇄ *kutara* to one another. The behaviour in this case emphasises the fact that this is a very special and unusual relationship and one which contrasts with the normal pattern of behaviour, of which it is a complete reversal. Towards my own *mari*, my own mother's mother's brother, the man whose daughter's daughter I may marry—whose actual daughter, my *mukul rumaro* (mother-in-law), is tabu, and to whom I must behave with greater reserve than to any other person in my kinship pattern—to this man I act with great circumspection and austerity. This is in marked contrast with the behaviour towards the *mari* whom I call *wäkkälmändji*, and whose *gerri* I may borrow.

This behaviour again serves to stress the fact that al- 421 though material possessions among these people are simple 602 and relatively few, the question of individual ownership of property and the right to dispose of this, is never in question, but is actually stressed in the kinship system, which defines and regulates conduct.

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[27] The "joking relationship", which serves to stress and to give [182] point and contrast to, the behaviour between relatives in which the [171] pattern is very restrained and austere, often takes the form of organised licence with exchange of obscene jokes and taunts which under other circumstances would lead inevitably to a fight, is a feature of the social organisation in many parts of Australia although there is little reference to it in the accounts of kinship which have been published.

See Donald F. Thomson, *The Joking Relationship and Organised Obscenity in North Queensland*, American Anthropologist, Vol. 37, No. 3, July-September, 1935. [113]

It is this
ceremonial exchange cycle, and the rule that *gerri* from 431
one direction pass to the opposite quarter, e.g. from *kumur* [182]
kätjirk and *kumur kärin* to *kumur miwait*, which provides [177]
the means by which such objects as boomerangs (*källi-gälli*), a conspicuous foreign element in the area, have come from a region hundreds of miles away. It provides the motive force by which bundles of stone spear heads, (*lirra ŋämbi*), have come north from the far-famed quarry at *ŋillipidji*, and dispersed throughout the territory. There is, however, some flexibility in this arrangement for it is obvious that a man who receives a ceremonial present from a partner may pass it to one of a number of people situated in a fairly wide
geographical range. The natives refer to the routes along [192]
which *gerri* are passed as *dukarr*, paths, or roads[37] because these have become fixed fairly definitely by tradition.
Objects of a certain type, such as boomerangs, although they [439]
are not manufactured in Arnhem Land but originate far to the south or south-west, may come by a south-western route along the Katherine River; from the south, up the Wilton by way of the Raimbaräŋa, a tribe of the interior, or they may come from the same source by a more easterly route via the Ritar'ŋo and Wagilläk clans, who, like the Raimbaräŋa, are interior people and are great rovers. (See map No. 2.)

This means that of a number of boomerangs manufac- 431
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[37] The use of the term "road" for these routes along which [171
objects passed within these ceremonial exchange systems, seems 192]
to have been general in Australia and Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown has furnished the following note from his experience of Western Australia:

"The way in which objects pass continuously in one direction (which the W.A. natives call a 'road') is illustrated by the presence of pearl-shell from the Kimberley District among the tribes of the Great Australian Bight."

so it is with man's spirit. Moreover, according to native 779
psychology, a man has two souls, and according to some 775
beliefs, it is a man's bush or trickster spirit which goes to the 614
Island of the Dead. But however that be, the more im- [774]
portant of these two spirits of the dead does sojourn in the [764]
totemic well, and to make sure that the spirit arrives there, [778]
signs are made by pointing and singing to the grandfather
to come for him. As one informant told Dr Warner, who
studied the subject intensively, 'if we didn't sing, he might
go bad because evil ghosts might catch him and take him
out in the jungle country where they live. It is better that
his old grandfather and his ancestors come and get him and
take him straight to his clan well where his totem came from.'

Religion

Readers of Mr Chaseling's book will be impressed by the 771
important part played by religion in the life of the Aborigines.
Mythology and ritual, totemism and beliefs regarding the
spirit of man, the Great Creator Spirit who is revealed in the
Rainbow Serpent, and the 'mother goddess', are all part of
this religious life. The ritual is the prescribed acting of the
great myths by fully initiated men; the mythology provides
the sanction and pattern for the rites and for present-day
behaviour. The emphasis on the Creator Spirit (associated
with the sky) and a kind of 'earth-mother' distinguished [171]●
Arnhem Land from Central Australian mythology, though
interest in the sky-world and a belief that it is the source of
life-giving powers (especially through the Rainbow Serpent
and the medicine-men), were widespread in Australia.
Mr Chaseling's Chapter 17 shows how the natives of his
region are fascinated by the sky-world and in their mythology reveal a desire to go to it.

Further details of north-east Arnhem Land myth and 114
ritual are given in W. L. Warner's *A Black Civilization*. He
also discusses fully the totemism of the region. A general